VENGEANCE AS A POLICY
IN
AFRIKANDERLAND
A PLEA FOR A NEW DEPARTURE

FRANCIS J. DORMER

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BY

FRANCIS J. DORMER

SOMETIME EDITOR OF THE
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TO THE MANES

OF

THE UNNUMBERED AND HEROIC DEAD

THE HEARTS THAT ARE BROKEN

TIES THAT ARE SUNDERED

VICTIMS OF AN INGLORIOUS WAR THAT OUGHT

NEVER TO HAVE BEEN

PREFACE

"VENGEANCE is Mine; I will repay," saith the Lord. Saving the Decalogue itself, it is difficult to imagine an injunction that any form of words could render more emphatic or precise, and still more difficult, perhaps, to conceive of any rule of conduct so hard for nations or for individuals to observe. Not in the whole world are there two nations professing more respect for divine authority than the Dutch of South Africa and the people of this realm; but subject their relations during the past twenty years to anything like a critical analysis, and it will clearly appear that the prohibition which the apostolic language conveys, a prohibition which dates back from the teaching of the earliest exponents of our faith, has been honoured more in the breach than in the observance thereof; and here, perhaps, may be found some clue to the mystery—why English and Dutch have not succeeded in getting on together—by which the minds of so many of our countrymen have been exercised since the present troubles in South Africa began.

I do not propose to undertake that analysis on the present occasion, but merely to indicate the line of inquiry that may be advantageously pursued by those who wish to arrive at some definite conclusion as to the events which have led up to the present situation and

desire to find some guidance with respect to the problems that await solution in the time to come.

It is possible, of course, in any survey of cause and effect, to exaggerate the importance of the part played by this individual or by that upon a stage so wide as the sub-continent on which the conflicting elements are now so fiercely contending for supremacy; but it is no extravagance to say that the history of South Africa, for at least twenty years past, has been largely the history of Mr. Kruger and Mr. Cecil Rhodes. It was never in doubt that the latter of these distinguished men was one of those whom the stirring events of 1880–81 left in an attitude of violent antagonism towards a settlement which was based upon the undeniable defeat of British arms. In one of his earliest speeches in the Cape Parliament—made, indeed, while the Convention of Pretoria was still pending ratification—he frankly avowed that he still cherished the ideal of a United States of South Africa under the protection of the British flag and would recognise finality in no arrangement in which that cardinal condition was not fulfilled. To some extent, it must be confessed, this masterful irreconcilable *was* reconciled to a situation which in his heart he loathed by the failure of the Transvaal Government to respond to the challenge that was thrown out to them over Bechuanaland in 1884; his views as to the aggressive designs of the Dutch were largely modified, when the Afrikander Bond came under the influence of Mr. Hofmeyr, by the elimination from the constitution of that society of the features by which it was originally disfigured; but the aims he professed upon his first entrance into political life have never been abandoned or renounced.

For ten years, however, if we may put his case in

homely phrase, Mr. Rhodes "had other fish to fry," and hence his apparent acquiescence in a situation he was sworn to revolutionise if ever the chance should come within reach of his powers. That was a period that embraced the amalgamation of the diamond mines, the discovery of gold in the Kaap and on the Rand, the birth of the Chartered Company, his accession to office as Prime Minister of the Cape, the formation of a new State that bore his name, the extinction of the formidable power of the Matabele chief.

These varied pre-occupations being enough to engage even the phenomenal energies of a Titan amongst active-minded men, the ruling passion seemingly had ceased to rule. For a time, indeed, it appeared as though the quality of that passion had been happily transformed. It had never, to do Mr. Rhodes justice, been inspired by a desire for bloodshed for the mere sake of seeing blood flow; but it now took on the form of a frank recognition of the widely prevailing belief that time was upon the side of the English and wholly opposed to the further evolution of the incompatible ideal cherished by a small but aggressive section of the Dutch. It was his favourite gibe at this period that he had succeeded in winning away the Cape Afrikanders from Krugerism, and the founder of that cult had better beware (since his old burghers were being drawn away to Rhodesia, and a mutual repulsion was apparent between himself and the new burghers) or he would be left as its solitary representative in the Transvaal. It is a striking illustration of the innate simplicity of a people who are now supposed to be the embodiment of suspicious cunning that it never seemed to occur to the Afrikanders at the Cape, throughout these years of deceptive calm, that they were being quietly jockeyed with a

view to the isolation of Mr. Kruger, when the hour for dealing with that redoubtable potentate should at length appear to be ripe.

It was in 1894 that the feelings which had been for so many years dormant or carefully concealed began visibly to revive. His remarkable successes in other directions had inspired Mr. Rhodes with the conviction that any opposition which might be offered to his schemes, from whatever quarter, could be either cajoled into acquiescence or effectually subdued. Mr. Kruger alone was found to be as adamant against all his suggestions, proof no less against intimidation than against any form of suasion known to Mr. Rhodes. The situation had, however, undergone a radical change since 1884. It was no longer a question of Transvaal aggression upon any British interest, but what measures the Transvaal would take to prevent the absorption by which its rulers believed themselves to be threatened—by the *Uitlanders* from within and the unceasing machinations of their arch-enemy from without. Mr. Kruger, in fact, had his back against a wall. He unhappily adopted the view, so natural to one whose survey of men and things was so limited as his own, that in isolation only, so far as the British were concerned, was the path of safety to be found. He refused, therefore, once again to enter into any Customs Union with his neighbours; he rejected the proposition that cut-throat competition between the several railway systems should be prevented by a pooling of "takes" on the basis of an agreed division of traffics amongst the lines running from the coast to Pretoria and the Rand.

At an interview which took place between the two statesmen, Mr. Rhodes went so far as to threaten Mr. Kruger with the consequences of his adherence to an

illiberal and reactionary policy, and Mr. Kruger replied very much in the vein that he had adopted somewhat earlier towards poor Sir John Willoughby, when that guileless baronet threatened him that he "would have to reckon with the British army" if he failed effectually to damp the Banjailand trek. "I think," said this very exasperating old gentleman, "we have reckoned with the British army before." Mr. Rhodes only threatened Mr. Kruger with an insurrection of his *Uitlanders;* but it was this indiscretion, coupled with the action of Sir Henry Loch, in placing on the Bechuanaland frontier a force that was numerous enough to irritate but not large enough to overawe, that aroused the suspicion and the wrath of the Boer Executive and induced them to arm in hot haste. "What has *he* to do with our *Uitlanders* and their grievances?" I well remember being asked by a member of the Boer Executive; and the most positive assurances that these predictions of trouble were nothing more than individual speculations failed to satisfy my interlocutor that they did not reveal an already existent plot.

Mr. Kruger, thoroughly aroused by the growing ascendency of Mr. Rhodes and his evident determination to interest himself in the case of the *Uitlanders,* was not content with replenishing his magazines and declaring to his burghers that their independence was once again endangered. He disdained to ask Her Majesty's Government, as he was advised to do, what was meant by a colonial Minister coming to threaten him in his own house with the consequences of his domestic policy; but he redoubled his exertions to secure closer union with the Free State and protective alliances with Continental Powers. Finally he succeeded in persuading himself and

his people that the South African Republic was as a small boy in the family of nations, and that no bigger boy could interfere with him without all the other adolescents intervening in his behalf. When Mr. Rhodes was next desirous of discussing matters with the President, the sturdy old Boer stood upon his dignity, with the result that Mr. Rhodes viewed his rebuff in the light of a personal affront, and an evident desire to humble Mr. Kruger's pride was not long afterwards discerned.

I do not leave out of account the master-motive or the spur that was given to his action by the fear that the Boer Republic would be transformed into a State whose independence all sections of the community would be united to uphold; but it was this sense of personal injury that accounted, probably more than all other considerations combined, for the readiness with which Mr. Rhodes threw himself into schemes for effecting the overthrow of his great opponent in the following year. The feelings of the natural man were not kept in subjection by the prudential restraints of the statesman, and thus there became superadded to the patriotic emotions continually evoked by the recollections of Majuba the most dangerous feelings of all to a man of Mr. Rhodes's temperament. What that temperament is may be gauged from the circumstance that it took him fifteen years to forgive a fellow-labourer in the same cause with himself whose sole offence was that he had "danced before Warren,"—in other words, had taken part in a complimentary banquet to that distinguished officer, given subsequently to the quarrel which unfortunately took place between himself and Mr. Rhodes.

Then came the Raid. It was difficult to believe that the lesson of such an incident as this would be lost

upon a public man of such rare intelligence as Mr. Rhodes. The force of old association is not easily broken, and those of us who had worked with him for years, believing that his guiding principles were right in the main, were content to regard that ill-starred enterprise as an untoward incident in an otherwise meritorious career, a piece of foolish impatience on the part of a young man in a hurry, who would be the first to admit, now that it was all over, that the shortest cut was usually the longest way round. The intimation to the House of Commons Committee that he would continue to pursue the same ends, but only by "constitutional means," was regarded as mere bravado to which no serious importance need be attached. It was understood that, so long as he was not required categorically to confess his fault, he would be careful not to repeat it, and on that basis he entertained the view that a reconciliation with Mr. Hofmeyr and all that Mr. Hofmeyr represented might be arranged. Mr. Hofmeyr, however, was not found to be so complaisant as Mr. Rhodes had fondly imagined. He mourned over the backsliding of his friend; but he insisted, as the *sine qua non* of reconciliation, upon a public profession of regret and a solemn abjuration of all interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal in the time to come. The high stomach of Mr. Rhodes, notwithstanding his eagerness to regain the reins of power, could not brook the imposition of this penance, and thus it was that the two men went their several ways, and fresh seeds of vengeance were implanted in a breast in which they found a rich and rare abundance of congenial soil. The aggressor became the aggrieved, and "constitutional means" was soon found to be a term that had acquired an entirely novel significance and elasticity.

I retain a vivid recollection of the wild exclamation with which Mr. Rhodes sought, on his return to England to "face the music" in 1896, to stop the prickings of his conscience about the very disagreeable position in which he then found himself and from which he has never since been able to effect his escape. "There is some satisfaction, after all," he said, "in being back with one's own people;" but the little monitor within would not be silenced, and he could not conceal from himself, or from those about him, the undeniable truth that the cheers of Port Elizabeth were purchased at too high a price if they could not be obtained without drawing down upon his head the maledictions of the Paarl. Probably no statesman that ever held high office under the Crown had so crude a conception of the constitutional relationship that subsists between Ministers and the people as this extraordinary servant of the State. When he entered upon office it was with the sense of having received at the hands of the arbiter of the games a guerdon that had fallen to his own right arm. One of his predecessors having retired upon a paltry vote upon a vine-pest, we who had helped to place him in power begged that he would not imitate that bad example and "go out upon a bug." "I shall go out," he retorted somewhat fiercely, "when I am carried out," and when the time came for his retirement, the exceptional circumstances which rendered that event inevitable notwithstanding, he found himself unable to part company with his supporters with those polite expressions of profound esteem which pave the way to a reconciliation even between those whose temporary estrangements are the most acute. "I also have something to forgive," was his angry rejoinder to one who had ventured upon the

remark that his Afrikander supporters would never overlook his fault, "and they will find that I can be just as nasty as they can if they make it their business to keep the game alive;" and he has been as good as his word.

It is in these revelations of personal character and incident that the true inwardness of much that has happened will be found. The mainsprings of Mr. Rhodes's action in recent years have been feelings of personal resentment, grafted upon a stem of racial hostility, not less real in its existence because it was for so long a period concealed. Mr. Rhodes, in fact, is very human, and (though it is a hard thing to say) a man should be either more or less than that who proposes to play the leading part on such a stage as South Africa has been for a generation past, as it promises to be for a generation to come.

While it is incumbent upon us thus to recognise the influence of a deep-seated motive, most unhappy in its import, in the mind of the statesman who has been the most conspicuous representative of British interests for a space of nearly two decades, it is not the less essential that the mental attitude of Mr. Kruger and his immediate following throughout the whole of this period should be equally well understood. The Boers had forgiven England much in respect of earlier errors of policy; they could probably have forgiven her more; but what they never have forgiven and never could forgive was the refusal of the Imperial Government, at the termination of the war of 1880-81, to restore them to the exact position that they occupied when their flag was lowered in 1877. It was not alone that they deemed the acknowledgment of their absolute independence to be an essential condition of their safety. They felt themselves to be at least as worthy of

the status of a sovereign independent state as their neighbours across the Vaal, to whom the recognition of perfect freedom was not and for nearly fifty years had never been denied. The limitations imposed upon their liberty of action by the Conventions of Pretoria and London touched their pride and became a source of chronic irritation. In these pettifogging instruments were laid the seeds of all the trouble that has since ensued. The relationships to which they were supposed to give form were so unreal, so thoroughly unsuited to the circumstances, that it remains to this day an insoluble mystery of statecraft that such covenants should have been either accepted or proposed.

As a fact they were not accepted by the Boers without a formal protest which ought not to have been lost, as it was, upon those who had the conduct of South African affairs in hand. Their fatal imperfections were recognised in South Africa, if not in this country, long before they had begun to bear their inevitable fruit. At a certain meeting held in this metropolis in 1888, I remember predicting that no good would come of limitations that were not frankly recognised and could not be enforced, and I have still ringing in my ears the angry protests with which the suggested renunciation of a suzerainty that was potent for mischief and valueless for good was almost universally received. Nothing that has happened since, however, has served to convince me that it would have been impolitic on the part of England or prejudicial to her interests, once she had made up her mind to undo the annexation, to undo it ungrudgingly and without unworthy qualification or reserve. When you rob a man of a sovereign, and he takes you by the throat, there may be some chance of his recognising your redeeming qualities if you hand back to him say twenty-five shillings, but

not much if you "magnanimously" restore to him only fifteen. The Boers believed that the restrictions imposed upon their independence in 1881 were intended only to "save the face" of the British Government. They expected that these restrictions would be entirely removed in 1884. When their deputation returned home with only half a loaf, they accepted the concession as better than no bread at all, but the reservation of what was still withheld served only to accentuate their sense of injury. With the discovery of new and extensive gold deposits in the years immediately succeeding the Convention of London, their determination to be free and a corresponding determination on the part of the Imperial Government to maintain the *status quo* were, perhaps, equally inevitable.

It may be that not even the restoration of the Sand River Convention in its entirety would have kept in check the efforts of the Transvaal Government to extend their borders: that, to a certain extent, was the irresistible law of their being: but it would in all probability have prevented the craving for European alliances; it would almost certainly have prevented the political status of the *Uitlanders* being used as pawns in a greater game. These, indeed, are the necessary inferences from the exemplary conduct of the Free State Government up to the time of the present troubles. While under no delusions as to the feelings of the *Voortrekker* towards the interloping *Uitlander*, while realising to the full that the *Voortrekker* and his immediate assigns would cling to exclusive power as the limpet clings to the rock, I have never shared the view that Mr. Kruger was really animated by the design to oust Great Britain from her South African colonies. I have always regarded him as

the slave of one idea, that of restoring the complete independence of the Transvaal. It is quite compatible with this conviction that other ambitions should have made their presence manifest when once the dogs of war were let loose upon the rolling *veld*. War in all cases opens up new possibilities; it necessitates the largest possible stimulus to patriotic exertions. It is impossible, therefore, to refer to the season of yet unbroken peace every aspiration that may find an utterance, perhaps an irresponsible utterance, during the stress and strain of a struggle for national existence. Much would be gained if, at this present juncture, the sober-minded and fair-dealing people of this country could but realise that Boer policy has for twenty years been governed, not by a secret resolve to effect a complete severance between England and South Africa, but by a feeling of passionate resentment that Mr. Gladstone did not wholly repair in 1881, or later in 1884, the injury they sustained at the hands of Lord Beaconsfield in 1877. On occasions innumerable, while never challenging their right to aspire to the recovery of their perfect freedom, I have discussed with leading men at Pretoria the folly of attempting to gain their ends by the methods they pursued. The animating motive was transparent from the moment they evinced their readiness to run even the risk of absorption by Germany, advancing from the west, in order to inflict a defeat upon the paramount power. The effort to achieve an independence as honourable as that of their neighbours has not been less persistent than heroic. If its failure be not already acknowledged as complete, there can surely be no patriot left, even amongst the immediate *entourage* of Mr. Kruger, who remains unconvinced that vengeance as a principle of policy is a two-edged

sword that is apt to wound the one who wields it not less than him against whom it is employed.

Any account of the factors that contributed to the great upheaval would be imperfect without some reference to the part played by those members of the *Uitlander* community who found fame thrust upon them, in the early days of 1896, when they allowed their names to be submitted to a Boer Commission under the appellation of the Reform Committee. The condition upon which the sentence of imprisonment passed upon these representative *Uitlanders* was in large part remitted was, it will be remembered, that they should abstain from interference in Transvaal politics, directly or indirectly, internal or external, for a term of three years. So far as the great majority of the Reformers were concerned, this undertaking was most honourably fulfilled. The bulk of them, indeed, have regarded Transvaal politics as a subject much too thorny for them to handle at any time since that most unfortunate essay; but others, again, a small but active minority, working in the manner of the mole, found themselves unable to respect the pledge in its entirety, and to their desire for vengeance upon the Government at whose hands they had suffered so much must be attributed, in no small degree, such agitation as prevailed in Johannesburg in support of the designs of Mr. Rhodes to accomplish by "constitutional means" the ends he failed to obtain by the methods first employed. The interpretation placed upon their bond by these more ardent spirits was a source of intense irritation to the Government. The period of rustication was no sooner over than they began to show in real earnest that they had not "abandoned their intention to begin again as soon as they were free to do so." Mr. Fitzpatrick prefaced the

book he had spent three years in writing, and which he published while the issue still hung in the balance, by boldly meeting in advance the charge of the "peace" party—note the fine scorn the quotation marks convey—that he was "deliberately selecting a critical and anxious time as opportune for the contribution of a new factor to those already militating against a peaceful settlement." Was the odious charge repudiated as something foreign to his intention? Not at all. "The coincidence of another crisis with the date of [the Reformers'] emancipation may be an unlucky coincidence or it may be a result," says the candid scribe, "but there is neither necessity nor intention to offer excuses. The responsibility is accepted." What more would you have? Come weal, come woe, Mr. J. Percy Fitzpatrick accepts the responsibility! Perish the thought that an act of such chivalrous heroism on the part of so eminent an author—for have not Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery both testified to the influence that *The Transvaal from Within* had upon their minds?—is but a dubious recompense for the untold anxieties and incalculable sacrifice that the war has brought in its train! What if the grass does grow in the streets of Johannesburg and refugees starve by the thousand in exile from the scene of their labour and their homes! What if the whole region from the Karroo to the Bushveldt be reduced to the condition of primeval wilderness, and the Empire staggers under the burden of its gigantic and unwelcome task! "The responsibility is accepted," and none but a "pro-Boer" or a "Little Englander" would venture to suggest that acceptance and payment are not quite the same thing. It is difficult, no doubt, to find fault with men who refused, in the bitterness of spirit that their experience had naturally evoked, to accept as final the defeat they sustained

at the hands of Mr. Kruger; but in their case also it may be doubted whether, on a calm review of all that has ensued upon their desperate efforts to embroil the Republic with the Paramount Power, they will be inclined to regard vengeance as a policy that is justified of its fruits.

The action of the Imperial Government cannot be examined merely in the light of the recorded utterances of those who have been the responsible exponents of its policy. Men do not attain to high Cabinet rank in England without being facile in the art of so using language as to conceal their thoughts, and one might probably look in vain through the pages of Hansard and through all the columns of the *Times* for any evidence of vengeful motive, in their relations with the younger Boer Republic, so far as either Lord Salisbury or Mr. Chamberlain may be concerned. In the case of statesmen, however, as in that of lesser mortals called to account, character and antecedents cannot be wholly disregarded when judgment has to be formed upon evidence that is to some extent obscure. Governments, after all, are but a mirror of the people, and the people are fickle to an extent that probably found its highest expression in the wholesale reaction from everything associated with the name of Mr. Gladstone that set in seven or eight years ago. The Unionists came to power in 1895, if not with a positive mandate from the constituencies to avenge the humiliations with which the names of Khartoum and Majuba were indelibly associated in the public memory, at least with a tacit understanding between rulers and ruled that Ministers would strengthen their hold upon the nation by effacing, or rather by superseding, those unwelcome incidents in our history if a favourable opportunity should

chance to come their way. Actions, moreover, speak louder than words, and history will probably not acquit Lord Salisbury and his colleagues either of entering upon office with these vague desires, or of forming a subsequent determination to get even with Mr. Kruger for the mortification they suffered at his hands in connection with the immortal Raid. Their remarkable successes in the Soudan, against an enemy with whom it was a pitiful absurdity to compare the Boer, encouraged them to turn their attention to Mr. Kruger; but never until it was too late did they appear to be capable of taking Mr. Kruger seriously.

If they had been able to comprehend how formidable the task of reducing this fractious personage to order would prove, at any time after 1895, it is impossible to doubt that they would have walked more warily than they did in the conduct of their diplomacy. That they treated the matter throughout as though it were an affair of minor consequence was probably due to the miscalculations of their military advisers, who seem even yet to be hugging to themselves the fond delusion that "the Boers are the most ignorant people in the world," and therefore may be held of slight account, while the only enemy to be dreaded is distance and disease. The military estimate of Boer resistance may be gathered from the circumstance that while there were soldiers innumerable to revile the Raiders for their weak surrender and their bungling, there were none to point out the fundamental nature of their error in forming such a ridiculous estimate of the force that could be brought into the field against them. In no responsible quarter does the one essential feature of the situation appear to have gained practical recognition. Mr. Kruger as a domestic tyrant was not so much to be dreaded; he was at all times perilously near to the end

of his tether; but Mr. Kruger as the champion of Republican independence and Afrikander nationality was, in the circumstances, an opponent scarcely less formidable than a first-class European Power.

Of all conceivable policies that of vengeance combined with misplaced contempt for your opponent must obviously lead to the most surprising and most disappointing results. The results in this instance have been very surprising and disappointing indeed. They ought, if experience had not ceased to be a teacher, to operate as an adequate warning against the pursuit of a similar policy in the time to come. It is because the lesson does not seem to have been really taken to heart, because the moving finger of the rudest instinct of our nature is still evident in the attitude of our Government, towards the Boers on the one hand and the mining industry on the other, that I have ventured to take up my parable against a policy that may indeed find its consummation in a South Africa reconciled, but reconciled only upon the basis of a general detestation of British rule. Mr. Kruger would not say "Suzerainty," as Mr. Gould put it in his admirable cartoon, and hence the present war. Neither Boer nor *Uitlander* will say "Loyal British subject" if he finds applied to his affairs the system of government that is attended, according to Mr. Chamberlain, with such unspeakable felicity in Trinidad, Jamaica, and Ceylon; and the outcome—that, indeed, is not revealed to us; but, an approximate forecast can scarcely transcend the powers of those who are able to appreciate the truth that historic sequence is not uninfluenced by the natural laws of cause and effect.

These vaticinations, it may be superfluous to add, do not have their origin in the unpatriotic aspirations of a

"pro-Boer" or in the contracted vision of a "Little Englander." Believing as I do that British policy towards South Africa has been a long succession of almost incredible blunders, I am fain to admit that even the most misguided of our statesmen have been innocent, unless it be in recent years, of any wrong intent, and I can call to mind no single error upon their part that was at all comparable with the criminal folly of Mr. Kruger and Mr. Steyn (for which, perhaps, we ought to read Mr. Reitz and Mr. Smuts) in staking the existence of the two Republics upon resistance to a demand, no matter how unlawful upon the part of those who made it, which could have been satisfied without imperilling the established order. It was one thing to place within reach of the *Uitlander* the right to become a burgher; it was another for the *Uitlander* to avail himself of the privilege, with its corresponding disabilities and obligations. Yes, of course there was the point of honour; but that had long since gone by the board, on the day when Mr. Kruger agreed to go to Bloemfontein. The enfranchised *Uitlander* has not proved false to his new allegiance.

For the errors of their rulers the people have to pay, and in this case the penalty of annexation befits the folly and the crime. It is, indeed, the only conceivable punishment that would not fall rather upon the innocent victims of Boer unwisdom than upon the Boers themselves, and the forfeit will not prove so intolerable in the end if we have the courage and the insight, once the sword is sheathed, to substitute without delay the unabridged freedom of our colonial system for the limited independence that has been so much abused. The Boer is not insensible to the logic of the stricken field; he is not so ignorant of the virtues of responsible government that

he would not embrace his new-found liberties—not with ardour, it may be, but with a degree of acquiescence that could not fail to grow less sullen with the lapse of time—if they were placed within his reach; but it is not less essential that he should be left in no sort of doubt as to his absolute defeat in the fair, upstanding fight than it is that our policy towards him in the future should be free of all taint of oppression or vindictiveness. Hateful as the war is in all its aspects, the calamity of an inconclusive termination would be yet more terrible in its consequences than that of pursuing it until such time as resistance shall have ceased, not in a spirit of vengeance, but in obedience to the first and final law. The very existence of the Empire is at stake, and the preservation of the Empire is of immeasurably greater importance, both to ourselves and the world at large, than the precise form of liberty and independence that a handful of Boers in the now defunct Republics can be permitted to enjoy. It is impossible to conceive of any task more repugnant to the feelings of nine Englishmen out of ten than that of extinguishing the national existence of a people alien of language and of blood; but the necessities of the case are plainly inexorable, and they are no friends of the Boers who encourage in the breasts of the irreconcilables the vain delusion that anything resembling the *status quo ante* can possibly be restored. The great majority of the men now in the field, however, are under no misapprehensions upon this head. They continue the fight in order to secure the assurance of something less intolerable than a return to the *régime* with which they were made familiar between 1877 and 1881, in order to mark their resentment at the destruction of their homes. The extent to which this destruction was actually carried

out has been until quite lately a subject of warm controversy, but evidence is at length forthcoming which may be regarded as conclusive. I quote from the Open Letter which was addressed a few weeks ago to the inhabitants of the Free State by the Peace Committee formed at Kroonstad. The document is signed by three members of the late Volksraad, three Special Justices of the Peace, and a high military official:—

"What is the condition of the Orange River Colony to-day? Most of the farms have been burnt, nearly all the cattle have been removed, and what still remains of the sheep are full of scab, and is either slaughtered by the contending parties or must necessarily die of neglect. To plough and to sow is impossible. The country is literally one vast wilderness. The farmers have been obliged to come into the towns for protection, and huge refugee camps have been formed by the British for them and for their families. These people have lost everything they possessed in this world, and ruin and starvation stare them in the face. This state of affairs is becoming worse from day to day."

This volume relates to policy rather than to war, and it forms, therefore, no part of my plan to enter upon a review of the military operations; but it is not wholly foreign to the present purpose to observe that the consummation so devoutly to be wished would probably have been attained, when once the Boers were fairly on the run, if the specially exasperated Colonials to whom Lord Roberts assigned the duty of "sweeping" the south-eastern portions of the Free State had not carried out their task in the spirit against which these pages are intended as a protest and a warning. The Boers are no angels, it may well be; the havoc wrought upon their homesteads may have seemed to those who

committed it as nothing more than a fair retaliation for the injuries sustained by our own people when fleeing from their homes; but reprisal breeds fresh reprisal all along the line, vengeance becomes the mother of implacable hate and resistance to the death, and thus the evil work goes on. I plead for the elimination of this disastrous principle from the conduct of Briton and of Boer alike, and for a practical recognition of the truth, which our mutual histories should ere this have taught us, and more especially the history of the past two decades, that we are both endowed with such stubborn natures that probably we are the last people in the world upon whom a policy of vengeance, whether in peace or in war, can profitably be tried. There are not wanting other and not less potent weapons in the armoury of conduct, and unless civilisation is eventually to disappear in a welter of ruin and hate from a continent upon which its foothold is but newly gained, the time will have come at the close of this blood-stained chapter when the policy of vengeance must be frankly, honestly and by all parties abandoned once for all. The sorrow by which every loyal heart must be filled at the thought that a great and glorious reign should have set in bloodshed and in tears can but intensify the hope that a new accession may be signalised by a declaration of more generous and more politic intentions than any that have been up to the present time avowed. The annexation cannot be undone; but the annexation would be robbed of half its sting by wise concessions to the weaknesses and the strength of those whom it concerns, which the policy of Mr. Chamberlain fails essentially to comprehend. War is an exceptional state that has standards and requirements peculiarly its own, and for those who are not devoid of the instinct that has made this empire not only

great but free, there is no room for difference as to the unwelcome necessity that compels us to prosecute the conflict to a termination in which our superiority shall be unchallenged; but the more severe and protracted the struggle, the greater the need that such careful, exhaustive and dispassionate thought should be given to the future that it will be placed beyond the bounds of all reasonable probability that any like misfortune can at any time recur. It will not seriously be contended that in this, which is, after all, its most important aspect, the South African question has been considered as yet with the fulness of information and freedom from bias that its importance so plainly deserves.

In so far as I have taken any part in the controversies that have raged during the past five years, it has been my endeavour to present the case that still awaits the final verdict of the English people from the point of view neither of pure Briton nor of pure Boer, but from that of the Anglo-Afrikander, whose concern at the present time is rather for the future of hisc ountry than for the making of a case against this side or for that.

The Anglo-Afrikander is not of necessity a colonist of English parentage who was himself born in South Africa. He may have been born in these islands; but he must at any rate have lived long enough in South Africa to regard that country as his home, not as a temporary abiding place, and he must have very distinct ideas as to its interests and its rights. He must be free from racial prejudice. He may, by force of circumstances, have been a burgher of the Free State or the Transvaal, but it is not at all necessary that he should have at the back of his mind, or deep down in the depths of his heart, any intention or desire to terminate, now or at any future

period, the dependence of South Africa as a whole upon the British Crown.

I have in the number of my acquaintances many hundreds who answer to this description. They are as far removed from ultra-British notions of South African policy as they are from acceptance of the programme of the aggressive Dutch. They form, it is true, no party in any South African Legislature; they have no separate organisation in the country. At the present time one would look for traces of them in the columns of the press almost in vain; but nevertheless they exist, and together with those Dutch-Afrikanders who never sympathised with Krugerism in any of its characteristic manifestations, although every fibre of their souls is thrilling with patriotic emotion now, they form the permanent majority of the country, and it is in their hands that political ascendency will eventually be found.

I am far from saying that these potential members of a party that has yet to evolve would all be found in the same camp if one should set out to seek and find them all to-day. War, like other forms of adversity, results in strange bedfellows, and it is not difficult to suppose that, on the one side as on the other, many a valiant hero has been fain to ask himself whether he had not probably at least as much in common with the enemy as with many amongst his comrades-in-arms. Happy the thought that war, after all, is but a brief and infrequent interlude. Not even this war, amazing though its prolongation, can last for ever, and when the final shot has been fired and the last unhappy victim shall have been swathed in his winding-sheet, the saner men of both sides, who regard it all as a hideous mistake that ought never to have been, will come together,

and the bond of union between them will be remorse for their supine acquiescence in the past and the mutual resolve that never again shall the wide uplands of their common country be sullied by the spectacle of brother shedding brother's blood.

In the pages that ensue it will be seen that the standpoint of the Anglo-Afrikander is for the most part preserved. Some of the chapters are literally brands plucked from the burning; but the bulk of the matter sees the light now not for the first time. I am induced to reprint it in order to satisfy the wishes of friends, mainly in South Africa, who do me the honour still to attach some importance to my opinions, although I no longer enjoy the advantage of being able to form them in their midst.

It will be seen that one of the earliest of these reprinted articles, though amongst the latest in place in this volume, was published on the day before the Jameson Raid. It was actually written in the early part of the month wherein that memorable event occurred, and it was originally sent to the *Times* in the hope that it was not too late to prevent the consummation of what I had regarded from its inception as the monumental blunder of the century. The *Times*, for reasons of its own, which were all too apparent not long afterwards, and with polite regrets, denied me the hospitality of its columns. Then came, like a bolt from the blue, the Venezuela sensation. That I regarded as a perfect godsend for South Africa, for it never occurred to me as possible that the authors of external action against the Boer Government could be so insane as to persevere with their intentions at a moment when England was apparently on the brink of war with the United States. As the month advanced, however, and there were no signs either from Cape Town

or Johannesburg that the project had been abandoned, the anxiety of those who were able to perceive nothing but evil in the contemplated movement naturally increased, and it seemed necessary to protest at once if one intended to protest at all. There is, it is true, no particular advantage arising from remonstrance when the effort is doomed in advance to prove in vain; but it was some satisfaction afterwards to know that one had not only privately resisted the policy of external intervention for nearly a twelvemonth, but that one's public condemnation was placed on record before, and not after, the sorry failure of the Raid had become an accomplished fact.

I at any rate cannot be suspected—not at least by those who have any acquaintance with South African affairs from 1881 to 1895—of any feeling of personal antagonism towards Mr. Rhodes; but I cannot blind my eyes to the fact that he was the *fons et origo* of the conspiracy of 1895 or ignore the evidence of my senses that he it was who engineered and made inevitable the collision that occurred in 1899. He it is whose finger can be traced in the insidious proposal to crush the Transvaal politically by an extended term of Crown Colony administration, while crippling it financially by a burden of unproductive debt. The underlying motive of such a policy may be reasonably inferred from its probable effects if perchance it should succeed. The personal triumph of Mr. Rhodes over his political opponents, from Mr. Kruger downwards, would be regarded as complete. The relative importance of Rhodesia would be vastly enhanced. Johannesburg would be effectually punished for its failure to support Jameson. The Boers would be brought to heel; and South Africa would in due course be consolidated by Mr. Rhodes in his own way

and on his own terms. It is, in short, a continuance in a new form of the old policy of vengeance, from which consequences the most disastrous have already sprung.

There is no private consideration that can be set in the balance against the paramount obligation of denouncing and opposing a Machiavellian programme such as this, fatal as it is to the hopes of an amicable understanding with the foes whom we are anxious to convert into friends and fraught with the most imminent dangers to British rule. It was one thing to rejoice over a sinner that repented, as many of us thought we had good warrant for doing in the early days of 1896; it is a quite different proposition to subordinate the peace of a continent and the integrity of an empire to the promotion of a scheme for individual aggrandisement. Five years ago, it was thought and understood that while the Imperial Government would rise at once to the level of its duties with respect to the Transvaal, Mr. Rhodes would leave the Boer states alone and make an earnest and honest endeavour to conciliate the colonial Dutch. The Imperial Government, for reasons that will be set forth in one of the chapters in this volume, allowed three years to pass without according any recognition to the continually increasing military strength of the Boers. Their indifference or inability, call it which you will, was the occasion of great discouragement to those *Uitlanders* who were prepared, if properly supported by the Imperial Government (but were not prepared to respond to the irregular and veiled incitements of an irresponsible politician at the Cape), to do their part in compelling Mr. Kruger to yield what it was right and necessary to compel him to concede. Mr. Rhodes, however, for reasons already stated, abandoned the idea of

conciliating the colonial Dutch. Taking advantage of the pre-occupations of the Imperial Government and the discouragement of those *Uitlanders* who believed that certain action on the part of the Imperial Government was essential to any solution of the problem, he was able to organise the movement that culminated in the war. The course of events since hostilities began has failed to demonstrate the wisdom or propriety of this action; it has done much, on the other hand, to convince many of those who were most tender in their regard for Mr. Rhodes that the leader whom they formerly regarded as the Man Indispensable has made himself for the rest of his natural life the Man Absolutely Impossible.

That conviction, however, is one in which he himself apparently does not share. According to gossip at the Cape, Sir Gordon Sprigg is presently to retire from the office of Prime Minister and accept that of Agent-General in London, making room for Mr. Rhodes as his successor. This arrangement cannot, however, become an accomplished fact without the concurrence of a Governor who represents the King's Majesty and discharges the duties of his office in accordance with instructions received from Ministers at home. In ordinary case it is not the part of the Imperial Government to interfere with the free working of colonial institutions; but the Cape has ceased, for the time being at all events, to answer to the description of an ordinary case; its circumstances are altogether exceptional; and if it is not desired that South Africa shall approach nearer even than it now is to a veritable inferno, His Majesty's Government will see to it that this contemplated shuffling of the cards does not actually take place. Great as the service was that

Mr. Rhodes did undoubtedly render to South Africa and the Empire before he succumbed to the Napoleonic idea, there is none that he can render now save that of leaving public affairs severely and carefully alone. It is a deep descent, from the enviable position of unchallenged hero upon such an animated stage as South Africa to that of the wicked villain of the piece; but the fact cannot be too soon or too distinctly recognised that this change of rôle has taken place. To South Africa not less than to England is the recognition due. Governors and Ministers in the future will be successful in their several offices in proportion as they were not identified with the events that culminated in the war. The identification of Mr. Rhodes, open and unavowed, is complete enough to be beyond the range of toleration. It is impossible to imagine a period, no matter how distant, within the lifetime of the present generation, when his return to power would be other than an intolerable affront, not to Dutch sentiment alone, but to those loyal colonists of English origin who set above all other considerations the reputation of their rulers for sanity and rectitude and temperance in the conduct of affairs.

The most urgent need of South Africa at the present time is that of statesmen who will be able to balance with well-tempered sagacity on the side of the English the virile qualities that the war has made manifest amongst the leading Dutch. Mr. Rhodes is one of the few men to whom his countrymen naturally turn at such a juncture with some confidence in his ability to cope with an unprecedented situation; but the consciousness that his temperament is subject to this radical vice of phenomenal vindictiveness, coupled with the reflection

that the natures of childless and unmarried men do not usually become softened with the advance of years or by experience of opposition, may well excite serious alarm, in the minds of those who are best able to gauge the situation, at the prospect of his early return to power. While it has been long evident that he would not be happy until he had achieved his heart's desire, we have, unfortunately, no assurance that he will be happy even now that he has gained it. The Ethiop does not change his skin nor the leopard his spots. The Dutch are as conspicuously lacking in the quality of pliancy as Mr. Rhodes is in that of a wise forgetfulness, and we have only to contemplate the possibility of a prolonged struggle between natures so irreconcilably opposed to become seriously alarmed at the paucity of alternate advisers which the situation at the Cape reveals. Nothing short of absolute necessity could justify the selection of Mr. Rhodes, at such a juncture, as Prime Minister of a new and inexperienced Governor. The breakdown of the existing system which such a choice would imply can serve only to strengthen the hope that His Majesty's Government will now at length resolve, under pressure of a necessity that events have forced upon them, to treat South Africa as a whole, and not as a congeries of unconnected fragments, if only in order that the representative of sovereign authority may be able to command without delay the best assistance that the country in its widest limits can afford. Materials could no doubt be found for one competent legislature, with capable and independent men enough to fill two front benches, but the resources of the country do not admit of such political talent as exists being dissipated in the manner at present proposed. Regret as we may that the war should have

thrust upon the Imperial power the duty of thus intervening in local affairs, it would be fatuous in the highest degree to pose ourselves as though the war and the rebellion had never been.

The brief session of Parliament that was held in December was a great disappointment to those who have not yet succeeded in eradicating from their cardinal beliefs the idea that the House of Commons is the visible embodiment of the wisdom and the virtue of the nation. Happily, no irrevocable decision was taken upon the great questions in which the future peace and prosperity of South Africa are involved, and it is greatly to be hoped that no such decision will be arrived at until the policy propounded from the Ministerial benches has been more deliberately examined in relation not only to what I have ventured to distinguish as the Anglo-Afrikander point of view, but to the interests of the Empire as a whole. The Boer States have only to be subjected to Crown Colony administration, the mining industry saddled with the burdens it is proposed to lay upon it, and the Cape left without fundamental change as a base for the further operations of Mr. Rhodes, and the prospect for the future, in the estimation of many who combine some political insight with extended knowledge of South African affairs, will be more forbidding even than the retrospect. Will nothing short of actual and bitter experience serve to convince Parliament and the nation that South Africa will never be pacified, much less reconciled, by any such means? Have we still to learn that upheaval in South Africa carries with it as its inevitable corollary paralysis abroad and daily growing discontent at home?

The republication of some of the articles and letters

contained in the present volume may seem to savour to some extent of a personal vindication. While it would be affectation to deny that any such purpose existed, it may at least be urged that in the great inquest which the course of events has rendered imperative, it is well that those who have anything whatsoever to contribute towards the solution of a problem yet unsolved in some of its more important aspects should not be restrained by any sense of false modesty from saying that which they have to say. The Anglo-Afrikander clung while he could with passionate fervour to the cause of peace. Hence it was that when Mr. Kruger armed, and could not be deterred from arming, he pleaded, as the best security for peace, for an instant and an equal readiness for war. It was the long neglect of this paramount duty of preparation that encouraged some amongst the Republican leaders to dream dreams, and made the struggle immeasurably more arduous when it came.

It was not the Anglo-Afrikander who fell into the lamentable error of preaching contempt for the potential foe. On the contrary, it was from these quarters that the earliest and most emphatic protests came against the idea that the task in hand would be a walk over, or could be accomplished by the employment of a force that was compelled by its very nature to cling to the lines of communication. From these quarters the Government was vainly urged, even before the war began, to form a reserve of thirty or forty thousand horses in the eastern districts of the Cape. From them the warning note was sounded against the vain delusion that the war was over because the Boers made no defence of their fortifications and their towns. To err is human; but a Government which has proved itself rarely, if ever,

right in its most sanguine anticipations can hardly afford to disregard the matured and deliberate convictions of those who have at all events some claim to a patient and respectful hearing. Nothing is easier than to select those who agree with you as your guides, philosophers and friends, and then to rail at "local advice" if your calculations prove to be altogether wrong. Opinion is in these cases not infrequently valuable in proportion as it differs from your own. Be this, however, as it may, Ministers may rely upon it that nothing short of an overwhelming conviction that their policy is wanting in all the essentials of wisdom would prompt a solemn declaration against it at a time when the duty of maintaining at all events the appearance of unanimity is paramount, when none are for a party and all are for the State. Lord Salisbury may be able to contemplate with equanimity the prospect of "generations" of such treatment of the South African disorder as he and his colleagues have proposed. I crave some indulgence and a due consideration for the fears of those who are unable to look forward to the future that such treatment unfolds without unfeigned anxiety and profound alarm.

F. J. D.

London, *January* 1901.

"If God will be revenged for this deed,
Take not the quarrel from His powerful arm;
He needs no indirect nor lawless course
To cut off those that have offended Him."

—*King Richard III.*

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THE COST OF THE WAR

[December 1900]

VENGEANCE AS A POLICY

CHAPTER I

OUR UNEXAMPLED UNANIMITY

If we are unanimous about little else in regard to the war, it must be admitted that a singular unanimity appears to exist amongst all sorts and conditions of men (the potential victims alone excepted) that what was described in Parliament by some as "the wealth of the Transvaal," and by others as "the resources of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony," shall contribute "a considerable proportion," or "as much as they can bear," towards its cost.

This unanimity, as remarkable as it is almost unexampled, clearly affords abundant material for reflection. Is it to be taken as conclusive evidence in itself that the dictates of justice require that this contribution shall be exacted, that it is expedient to exact it, or that circumstances will admit of its exaction, no matter how unjust or how impolitic it may be? Or must we take it as yet another illustration of the readiness of the masses to jump to any conclusion which their passions or their prejudices may suggest, and of the equal readiness of politicians to play up to any passion or pander to any prejudice that may serve as a means of gaining the favour of the mob? If the faculty of intelligent anticipation be not indeed as dead

as it has lately seemed to be, these are questions upon which a little calm consideration will be widely bestowed in the brief space that yet remains before the labours of Lords and Commons are resumed.

What evidence is there of justice, of wisdom, or of knowledge in the hue and cry that all parties have entered upon with such singular zest against the very community whose grievances we set forth to redress, less than fifteen months ago, in a spirit of lofty enthusiasm and self-righteousness? As for justice, it must be admitted that there is no pretence of any. "The mines can pay, and we intend to make them." That is the argument most commonly advanced. When pressed with the objection that that in itself is not sufficient evidence of its justice, we meet with nothing better than the lame response that distance lent enchantment to the view, that the nation is now disillusionised, that the Boers are found when at close quarters to be very fine fellows indeed, while the *Uitlanders* are but "unspeakable scum," and the "cosmopolitan capitalist" an undeserving wretch for whom the pangs of having a few teeth drawn were a fate altogether too good. To those who permit themselves to be carried away by sweeping and inconsequential generalisations such as these, it would probably be but waste of time to address any sort of sober remonstrance; but there must be some at least who are capable of understanding that these so-called reasons have little to do with the case, that you do not of necessity hit the individuals whom you desire to get at when you lay intolerable burdens upon the mining industry, that the mines are but one of several interests of a tangible character that exist in the Transvaal, and that the Transvaal forms but a limited portion of the

total area of disturbance in which precious blood and precious money have been expended.

The controversy must be raised to an altogether higher plane before it is possible for any conclusion that is either equitable or politic to be reached.

Nobody at this date pretends that the conflict is the outcome of any single occurrence, no matter how important in itself that occurrence may have been. The orthodox account of it is that it was inevitable, and presumably it became so from the moment of the inconclusive and unsatisfactory termination of the former war. That is a theory by which Raid and Reform are relegated to the category of minor incidents, and it cannot be reasonably advanced without a candid acceptance of all its consequences. The war of 1880–81 was, however, likewise but a single link in an extended chain of causation, and justice will not be done, either to South Africa or to the Empire, if all that led up to that war should now be jauntily or impatiently dismissed as "ancient history."

CHAPTER II

INEVITABLE: BUT WHY?

THE character of the original acquisition of the Cape is a factor that cannot be wholly ignored. The first settlers belonged to two nations, the Dutch and the French, between both of whom and England there was an almost chronic feud. England purchased the territory they occupied in 1814 for six millions sterling. The colonists were sold with the dominion "as though they were mere cattle." Neither party to the transaction thought it necessary to consult their wishes or to make provision for the repatriation of any of the 20,000 souls who were thus cut off from their natural allegiance. If England had gone through the form of calling upon the burghers to opt as to their nationality, as Germany did at a later period with the inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine, it is at least possible to argue that the course of South African history would have been altogether different from what it has been. The irreconcilable elements would have vanished from the scene long before their hostility could have come to a dangerous head. Those who remained would have been loyal by virtue of deliberate choice, and the Cape would have been an English colony in something more than name. The consequences of that initial blunder must surely be laid at the door of the nation by whose agents it was committed

and not at that of the handful of men whose existence as a community dates a couple of generations from the time when it occurred.

The main outlines of South African history are now familiar to all who take an intelligent interest in public affairs. It would be superfluous to recite the whole of the exasperating story, with its misjudgments, its want of foresight, its contempt for local opinion at almost every turn. It is necessary, however, to indicate some of the more cardinal errors from which the present situation has directly sprung. If, having annexed the Cape, our Government had not obstinately rejected the lessons which the loss of the American Colonies should have taught us; if it had guided, instead of vainly endeavouring to prevent, the natural and inevitable movement towards the interior; if it had not too readily accepted the assumption that the normal attitude of the white towards the black is that of brutal, unprovoked oppression; if it had been philanthropic at its own expense, when it resolved upon emancipating the slaves, instead of effecting that noble act of manumission largely at the expense of its alien subjects; if it had allowed the Dutch beyond the Orange River and the Berg to govern themselves under the protection of the flag instead of claiming to govern them from Downing Street or not at all; if it had not allowed the opportunity of acquiring Delagoa Bay to pass when it could have been purchased for a song; if it had not failed in its obligations as the paramount Power, and thus allowed Germany to get a foothold in Namaqualand; if it had not seized first the diamond-fields and then the Transvaal without the shadow of right; if it had fulfilled the promises made at the time

of the latter annexation; if it had carried out when in office the policy enunciated by its principal members when in opposition—"If I knew the country to be as valuable as I know it to be valueless," was Mr. Gladstone's famous declaration in Mid-Lothian, "I would still say, give it up"—if, being at war, no matter what the merits of the quarrel, it had refused to make peace until the superiority of British arms had been fully demonstrated; if, when it came to make peace, it had framed the covenants, not in such way as to throw dust in the eyes of the people, but so that there could be no possible doubt as to their meaning; if it had insisted upon all those covenants being faithfully observed; if it had not encouraged Mr. Kruger to work his wicked will upon his *Uitlanders* by repeatedly leading him to believe that their treatment was a matter of purely internal concern; if it had insisted upon all questions then at issue being settled at the time of the Raid, and had adequately punished all those who were implicated in the Raid; if it had met armaments by counter armaments, as it was strongly urged to do; if its military organisation had not been the laughing-stock of the world; if it had approached the issues that were raised at Bloemfontein with the purpose of dissolving Afrikander solidarity instead of recklessly defying it, the chances are that the war would never have occurred, no matter how "inevitable" it may be found convenient to declare it now.

CHAPTER III

NOT THE FAULT OF THE MINES

NONE of these sins of omission or of commission can be laid at the door of those whom it is proposed to single out as the objects of special vengeance when the time arrives for the burdens resulting from the war to be adjusted. The *Uitlanders* connected with the mining industry went to the Transvaal, made homes for themselves and their families, gave every conceivable hostage to fortune, in the blind belief that they were fully protected by Conventions that ensured for them the right to travel, reside, and pursue their several callings without molestation.

Some of these *Uitlanders* were ready to become burghers if, at the moment of taking upon themselves the obligations of burghership, they were also permitted to exercise its privileges. Others were content with their status as aliens, relying upon the good offices of their several governments, and mainly upon the Power which claimed to be paramount, for the due protection of their interests and their rights. Such was the position until the Boer authorities began to tamper with the tacit agreement that subsisted between themselves and the new-comers — either to govern the country with a due regard to their wishes and their interests, or to admit them to a due share in responsibility and power.

When it became necessary for the *Uitlanders* to interest themselves in internal politics, a necessity which arose from Mr. Kruger's contemptuous indifference to their opinions, their first endeavour was to promote the formation of a Progressive party amongst the Boers themselves, reinforcing it by such of their own number as were willing to take upon themselves, in return for its privileges, all the duties and obligations of burgherships. Despite the efforts of the reactionaries to keep the door closed against all liberal influences, the Progressive party, both within the pale of the Constitution and without, became a great and growing force. It was never so strong as in the years immediately succeeding the fraudulent re-election of Mr. Kruger in 1892.

We all know how its programme was spoiled; but a brief reminder, "lest we forget," may be not inappropriate in this connection. The Prime Minister of a British colony, managing director of three powerful and semi-political British financial corporations, actuated by the idea that the realisation of this programme meant a purified and strengthened Republic, that would probably be even less willing to lend itself to schemes of Federation than the Boer Republic had proved to be, endeavoured to capture the movement for the promotion of his own ends.

Not only did he fail, but he destroyed the Progressive party in the Transvaal, and effectually alienated from the cause of reform the powerful sympathies of the Dutch in the adjacent territories; and yet, even when the movement collapsed, there was something more than a prospect of distinct good eventuating from undoubted evil. All that was requisite was action

suited to the occasion on the part of the Imperial Government and its agents. The former was paralysed, presumably by the guilty complicity of some of its members in what had taken place. Of the latter, one was reduced to a state of mental and physical incapacity, while the other thought it apparently a fitting opportunity, not to advance the cause of his countrymen, but to rail at them and reprove.

CHAPTER IV

TIMELY WARNING FROM UITLANDERS

THE Raid was not the fault of the *Uitlanders*, but their immeasurable misfortune. So long, however, as the consequences affected none but themselves, they bore their lot with exemplary patience and fortitude. It seems to be quite forgotten how hard in many respects that lot became throughout the whole of 1896 and the early part of 1897; but when it grew manifest that something more than their material interests was at stake, they did not hesitate in taking the course dictated by their conceptions of duty as loyal subjects of the Queen. If the war found England unprepared—and to the want of preparation must be attributed a large proportion of the cost—it was not because her subjects in the Transvaal failed in giving her timely warning of what was in the wind. So early as April 1897, the Uitlander Association of Pretoria addressed to Mr. Chamberlain a formal communication, in which the following significant passage occurred: "In view of the strenuous warlike preparations which we know are continuously being made by the Transvaal Government, we most humbly and sincerely trust that Her Majesty's Government will take such precautionary measures as will effectually safeguard imperial interests and the welfare of Her Majesty's loyal subjects in this part of the world."

The local opinion as to the nature of these precau-

tionary measures was that, as the Raid had precluded England from remonstrating with the Transvaal on the score of her armaments, a strong place of arms should be established at Laing's Nek, another at Mafeking, and a third at Fourteen Streams, with Imperial garrisons for each. This was regarded as the appropriate and necessary answer to the forts at Johannesburg and Pretoria, the importation of arms, and the evident disposition towards militarism on the part of Mr. Kruger and his advisers.

I very well remember, during a visit that I paid to the Transvaal about the time of this Pretoria warning, that I strongly urged upon two leading personages in Pretoria the folly of engaging in a game of beggar-my-neighbour with so rich and powerful a state as England. Asked what I meant by that, I replied that England could not possibly witness what was then going on in the Transvaal without taking some such steps as those just indicated. The answer from both quarters was as emphatic as it was significant: "Then there will be war." The incident was promptly and faithfully reported to those whom it was right to keep advised of such occurrences, and similar monitions were conveyed to Cape Town, from some quarter or other, by almost every mail. No sort of action was, however, taken either immediately or at any time before the new High Commissioner got at grips with Mr. Kruger upon an issue in respect of which it has been difficult, in fact impossible, to satisfy a suspicious and censorious world that the right is upon our side.

CHAPTER V

UNABLE, NOT UNWILLING TO PREPARE

THE answer which it is customary to give to reproaches of indifference and delay is that England had the Dervishes upon her hands, troubles on the Indian frontiers, a doubtful state of relations with the United States, distinct unfriendliness on the part of Germany, boundless worries about China, and the imminent prospect of a collision with France. Besides, there was the Jubilee.

That this was the state of affairs need not and cannot be denied; but because England was not in a position to fulfil her obvious and imperative duty in 1897, was it worthy of her position in the world that she should rush like a bull at a gate in 1899? Is it just that the consequences of her inability at one moment and her precipitancy at another should be borne by "the wealth of the Transvaal" in 1901?

The fact of the matter, no doubt, is that her Majesty's advisers were puffed up to such an extent by General Kitchener's overwhelming defeat of the Dervishes, followed by the refusal of the French to accept their challenge over Fashoda, that they were incapable of believing, in their excessive exaltation, that any walls which Mr. Kruger might have built around himself and his "ignorant and corrupt oligarchy" would not go down at the first blast of the Birmingham trumpet? Is it reasonable that the "wealth of the Transvaal" should

be called upon to bear the cost of this grievous miscalculation?

Having reckoned without their host at the outset, they were not able to get clear of any part of their self-delusion until the melancholy day when they were compelled to call Lord Roberts to their aid. Although they were fully warned before the war began that the forts and towns would never be defended, and that their real difficulties would commence when the operations degenerated into a guerilla campaign, they have had several subsequent attacks of the same mental disorder, from which it has taken many additional millions to effect even their partial cure. Are these millions also to be charged up against the "wealth of the Transvaal"?

CHAPTER VI

BUT THE MAGNATES MISLED US!

It is a familiar contention that the mines ought to pay because there has been no miscalculation save what resulted from the advice and information of leading South African capitalists, and because Mr. Rhodes, in particular, misunderstood the situation so completely that he cabled home, barely twenty-four hours before the presentation of the ultimatum, that Mr. Chamberlain had only to keep his pistol at the Old Man's head and he would get all that he wanted without fighting!

The sinister nature of this advice, if it was ever given, might have been inferred from the outrageous speech in which the same eminent authority, only a few weeks before, had openly endeavoured to egg both parties on to war by saying that, if it were France or Germany that threatened a rupture, he could understand the anxiety that was being displayed throughout the Empire; but Mr. Kruger! We should next hear that England trembled at the menace of some Samoan chief!

If it were proposed specially to penalise the authors of bad or insincere advice, there would probably be but little to be said against the suggestion; but no way has been pointed out as yet by which an injured and indignant nation can get at these prime offenders without equally or more severely injuring others who did not share their guilt. Mr. Rhodes, at any rate, does not fall

within the category of the wicked capitalists who would have to pay the smart if a special impost were to be laid on the "wealth of the Transvaal." Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who is believed to take a special and peculiar interest in Mr. Rhodes, and who will doubtless have something to say in this matter, will have to make an entirely new cast of his net if his purpose be the landing of this particular fish. There is, I believe, no adequate reason for the assumption that he could be pinched through the skin of the Consolidated Gold Fields, or that of any other corporation whose principal interests are in the Transvaal, and in which, at one time or another, he may have held a substantial number of shares.

If the real capitalistic interests in the Transvaal were animated by a strong desire, as undoubtedly they were, to see things put upon a far more satisfactory footing for all concerned in the industry, there is no reason to believe that they were as indifferent as Mr. Rhodes appeared to be to the means by which their ends should be attained. The attitude of the Chamber of Mines, the sole representative authority of the mining industry, was unexceptionable throughout. It maintained to the end the character that its original founders were careful to impress upon it, that of a strictly non-political institution.

Granted that the attitude of the *Uitlander* press was not marked by a similar correctitude, yet it is scarcely accurate to say that the press performed its part under capitalistic domination and at capitalistic instigation. An extraordinary amount of nonsense has found its way into print upon this subject, coming from quarters in which there is evidently no real acquaintance with the facts. The truth is that excess of zeal on the part of journalistic allies whose enthusiasm for the *Uitlander* cause, as they con-

ceived it, was not tempered by any sense of responsibility or by an adequate conception of the dangers of the game they were playing, was a source of continual embarrassment to the responsible heads of the mining industry. At the annual meeting of the Chamber of Mines, in 1899, M. Rouliot, the President, himself a partner in the leading financial house of Eckstein & Co., thought it incumbent upon him to disavow, on behalf of the industry, the seditious excesses to which the local exponents of *Uitlander* opinion (or, more correctly, alleged *Uitlander* opinion) allowed their language to run.

I myself, as the founder of the Company by which the leading journal was owned, and for six years its editor, thought it incumbent upon me, although no longer connected with the proprietary in any shape or form, to address the very strongest remonstrances to the responsible directorate, who supervised the undertaking in the interests of the shareholders; but it never occurred to me to hold those gentlemen responsible, still less the bulk of those in whose behalf they acted, for anything more than failure to prevent the excesses which I knew they deplored. I was well acquainted with the difficulty they had experienced in obtaining discreet and qualified men to whom such an onerous and delicate task could safely be entrusted as that of conducting a leading journal under the circumstances then existing in Johannesburg; and, in the absence of the Best, allowances had to be made for the toleration of the Good—good in design, but inconceivably evil in the method of execution.

CHAPTER VII

WHENCE THE FORCING CAME

If, in the centres of newspaper influence, there was any positive intention to force things to an issue, by "constitutional" or other means, it must be sought for elsewhere than in Johannesburg, as I, perhaps, have better reason than any one else to know. So early as the beginning of 1895, I parted company with this same newspaper organisation as the most emphatic means that were open to me of marking my dissent from the policy of intervening in the affairs of the Transvaal on which Mr. Rhodes had already made up his mind to embark.

Carried away by the attentions of the Court and the adulation of all classes of society in this country; led to imagine himself a heaven-sent statesman by the sickening hero-worship of such mischievous persons as Mr. Stead; vainly supposing that the Cape Dutch were his followers instead of he their instrument; foolishly believing, because Mr. Kruger gave way upon minor questions, on which he had no friend in the world except his own immediate faction, that he would yield at any point when pressed; apprehensive that a settlement would take place without affording him the chance of obtaining in the Transvaal, where he was greatly distrusted, the remarkable ascendency he had gained elsewhere, the "Great Elizabethan," as his opponents had already begun derisively to designate him, conceived his fatuous plan.

His first step in the fatal direction was to separate himself from all the old allies and associates who had helped to build up his position and renown, but had views of their own as to the legitimate limits of his activity. The next was to surround himself with mere creatures who were at one and the same time not only less critical, but, what was equally to the point, also less "squeamish."

Under the influence of the amazing idea that nothing of pith or moment could be accomplished without a little incidental blood-letting, and that their profession made them distinctly less "squeamish" than the rest of the species—an idea that was probably born of the earlier successes of Messrs. Rutherford Harris and Jameson—this extraordinary man proceeded to surround himself with a private cabinet of—doctors! The results of this singular conception are familiar to the world in the notable exploits with which the names of Wolff, Sauer, Somershield, Hillier, Smartt, Darley-Hartley, Davies and numerous lesser lights are memorably connected.

When the *dénouement* came, and he woke to the truth of the German proverb that God never allows any tree to grow too tall, his first impulse, as is well known, was to confess his defeat as final and retire from a stage upon which he could no longer play any useful part. How that decision came, unfortunately, to be abandoned is another story that need not here be told. Suffice it to say that his later determination was to pursue the aims he had previously entertained, but to confine himself to what were euphemistically termed "constitutional means." His conception of those means was not long in becoming apparent. Instead of endeavouring to get back to the *status quo ante*, which was in the circum-

stances the only prudent and honourable course to pursue, the newspapers which took their cue from Groote Schuur commenced a furious and seditious agitation the moment the Raiders and Reformers were out of Mr. Kruger's hands.

I had a curious personal experience which afforded me the most conclusive evidence as to the real origin of this most inopportune and ill-advised agitation. Circumstances that came to my knowledge when in Cape Town convinced me that the *Star* was going altogether too far, much further than any Government with an atom of self-respect could be expected to tolerate, and I accordingly arranged a meeting with Mr. Rhodes at De Aar for the purpose of acquainting him with my opinion that the paper was doing incalculable harm to every cause which it was supposed to advocate, and that its editor was only going to such outrageous lengths because he believed that violent incitements would be agreeable to him; that he, at any rate, had only to say the word and the rancour of its language would be considerably abated, while if it were not abated I had good reason for believing that the paper would be suppressed and a valuable property destroyed. "That," was the prompt rejoinder, "is exactly what I want: it will only be another nail in their coffin." It was useless, of course, to ask a man to prevent what he deliberately approved of, so I went my way, a sadder and a wiser man. The truth was self-evident of what had been for some time suspected. An honourable though misguided ambition to serve the cause of one's country, while winning fame and distinction for oneself, had degenerated at the first check into a vulgar passion for personal revenge. Such a man, animated by such a motive, was clearly capable of working untold evil in the land.

Within a very few weeks from the date of that encounter the *Star* was suppressed, most justifiably as I believed at the time and always have believed, and its conductors lost no time in appealing to Mr. Chamberlain against this invasion of their rights, which was represented as a breach of the Convention of London and a wanton outrage for which no provocation had been given.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REAL CAPITALISTIC LINE

THE local capitalists who were interested in the paper knew too well how much could be said on the side of the Government. In the difficulty into which they had been brought, very much against their will, they appealed to me for such assistance as I might be able to render, and it is interesting at this juncture to place upon record what took place between us.

I stipulated that the whole conduct of the difficulty with the Government should be left in my hands, and further required to know, before assuming the temporary direction of the paper, what objects they desired me to aim at, what course they expected me to pursue. The head of the principal firm declared that no objects that could possibly be promoted would please him better than that of bringing all sections of the community together—the mining interests were at that time very much divided, the English groups being in one camp and Mr. J. B. Robinson with the foreign firms in another —and securing a better understanding with the Government. The other said that he wanted nothing but peace and quietness and such reforms as would enable him to work with a profit his 8 dwt. mines.

These were such reasonable and proper heads of policy for a Johannesburg newspaper that I had no hesitation in adopting them as my own. I entered

upon my task *con amore*. The paper came out as usual under another name; the appeal to the Colonial Office was withdrawn; the right of the Government to suppress the paper was challenged in its own courts upon technical grounds, and the judges, "corrupt" and "without independence" as they have so frequently been declared to be, promptly set the decree aside.

A thorough understanding would not at that time have been difficult to attain. In conditions such as were then existent in the Transvaal, the English press was bound to loom far more largely in the imaginations of the Government than that of the local Dutch, and in the absence of representation in the Volksraad (at a time, too, when political meetings were discouraged and the leading men of the community were tongue-tied by reason of their connection with the abortive movement at the end of 1895) it exerted a very special influence.

The Government did not fail to appreciate the efforts that were made to bring about a better understanding. In response to representations from Johannesburg, that the *rapprochement* would be imperilled if the advances were found to come only from one side, they appointed a Commission for the purpose of making honest inquiry into the state of the mining industry.

The complaint is frequently made that the report of that Commission was not acted upon; but it is not so frequently pointed out that the Boer Government was given plainly to understand that it need expect no cessation of the war that was being made upon it even if the recommendations of Mr. Schalk Burger and his colleagues were accepted as they stood.

A wise statesman, of course, would not have been

deterred from measures of amelioration by menace of this description; but the quality of Mr. Kruger's statesmanship was at all times crude and unsophisticated, rough, ready, and unbending, and with nearly as little imagination in it as an anxious observer may find in Mr. Chamberlain's.

At a very early stage of this adventure, I perceived it to be vital to the success of any movement for getting back to the position from which the wrong departure had been made that the influence of Mr. Rhodes, who by this time was in London, should be wholly eliminated from the control of the newspaper organisation of which the *Star* formed a part. I accordingly made an offer by cable to purchase the whole of his shares at market price, volunteered the assurance that my sole endeavour would be to get back to the *status quo ante*, and added that the proposal was only made because its acceptance would make for peace. The offer was declined. The ardour of the local representatives of the principal firms for a *rapprochement* with the Government sensibly cooled down in proportion as that better understanding loomed in sight. It was patent what sinister influences were at work, and as the task was not congenial without the cordial support of those at whose instance I had taken it up, I promptly laid it down. At the same time, Mr. James Hay, the President of the Chamber of Mines, whose position had likewise been made untenable, abandoned the task which he had endeavoured most conscientiously to perform.

The Government came to the conclusion that there was no real desire for peace on the part of those who were able to pull the strings at Johannesburg, and the Dutchman's proverbial inability to give anything, without

getting something more than a fair equivalent in return, led to the virtual rejection of the Industrial Commission's report. Whatever explanation of that untoward event may have commended itself to others, I have never had any doubt in my mind that Pretoria declared itself unyielding because the conclusion had been borne in upon its mind that Johannesburg was irreclaimably perverse and unaccommodating.

My successor in the editorship of the *Star*, personally charming, one of the mildest-mannered men, indeed, that ever scuttled ship, had served his apprenticeship in Kimberley, and from start to finish of his career in Johannesburg there could never be the slightest doubt as to his design to set the heather ablaze if he could.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE STRINGS WERE PULLED

THE head centres of agitation in Johannesburg were neither the local capitalists nor the genuine *Uitlander*, who would have got along very tolerably with the Government if he had been left alone. Content he was not, nor could he be expected to be. But he realised that time must be allowed the Boer to forget the Raid; that he himself must take pains to make it clear that his movement was purely internal; that the Imperial Government should make it equally clear, by the means already indicated, that military preparation on the part of the Boers would necessitate counter preparation, and thus be money thrown away. It was in 1898 that the South African League, which had no more right to prosecute its campaign in the Transvaal than the Afrikander Bond, as originally constituted, had to carry on its propaganda in the Cape, began to make its baneful influence felt. At first regarded with derision and contempt, it gradually attracted to itself all the wilder elements that would in any case prefer to settle any question by violence rather than by reason. These enthusiastic adherents had no more conception of the difficulties surrounding the solution of that particular problem—difficulties caused as much by the ignorance and vacillation of our own Government as by any rooted hostility and invincible Toryism on the part of the Boer

—than people who have not transferred their hearts to their heads usually have of intricate affairs of State.

When, in the early part of 1899, which found me once again in Johannesburg, the word went round that the hands of England were now free; that Sir Alfred Milner had returned to the Cape with precise instructions to bring things to a head; that a couple of dashing young journalists had been brought out at unheard-of cost as *agents provocateur*, the League was not slow in taking its cue. Mountains were made of every mole-hill; every available engine of factitious agitation was brought into play; and a community that was yearning for nothing so much as for peace was made to appear not only willing but anxious to bear the appalling sacrifices inseparable from serious war. The High Commissioner was led to believe that Johannesburg had counted the cost, and so he assured the Secretary of State; but if any poor "white-livered," "chicken-hearted" thing should venture to suggest a pause for the purpose of engaging in this salutary operation, he was promptly dubbed a wretch who was false to his country and his Queen.

The aggressive activity of the League was the most powerful of all the proximate causes of the war, but in no sense can that organisation be said to be representative of the "wealth of the Transvaal." It was representative of the ultra-British emotions of a certain number of extremists in a British colony, and its whole inspiration was sought and derived from Mr. Rhodes, now its president. The success that attended its efforts is but another proof that it was a profound observer who declared that, in times of crisis, it is the more violent element that invariably gains the upper hand.

CHAPTER X

MUGWUMPS AND OTHERS

At the time of which I write, three Englishmen out of four in South Africa would have shrunk with horror from the prospect that the past eighteen months have unfolded. They allowed themselves to be intimidated by the designation of "Mugwump"; they were without spokesmen in Parliament who had the courage of their opinions, or organs in the press that could give expression to their views; and they and their children, and their children's children after them, must pay the penalty of their failure to assert themselves while yet there was time.

There were "Mugwumps" also amongst the Dutch. My last act in leaving the shores of South Africa at the end of March was to appeal to some of these to let not another day pass without proceeding to the organisation of that Centre Party to which the great mass of the people of both nationalities belonged, by which alone it could be saved from the red ruin which had already begun to haunt the imaginations of those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. I well remember the reply of one of them, whose voice should, at such a juncture, have resounded throughout the land as a trumpet-call to all the better instincts of the Afrikander nature: "No room exists for any third party in South Africa so long as England menaces our independence."

He, it was clear, had already been carried off his feet by the rising tide of racial animosities; but history will, I think, record its verdict that the Mugwumps of both nationalities are to blame for the war, not in the sense that Mr. Rhodes has lately insisted upon—his view being that they ought to have made an earlier appearance in one or other of the opposing camps—but in the quite contrary sense, that they should have made it clear, each to the extremists of his own faction, that the issues must be adjusted by some means short of war. The loyal Afrikanders, it must be admitted, sent their remonstrances to the wrong address; it was their part to admonish Mr. Kruger that he would get no aid or countenance from them if he should be so headstrong as to push things to the last dread arbitrament. The fault of the English Afrikander lay in his untimely reticence, in allowing it to be supposed that he favoured, or even acquiesced in, a rigid and imperious policy that made direct for war.

The responsible heads of the mining industry, the real representatives of the "wealth of the Transvaal," alone appeared to betray any perception of the gravity of the situation. They were ready, and more than ready, to meet the Government half way, and—I quote the language of a leading member of the Executive Council of the Chamber of Mines—"a load was lifted from their minds" on the day when overtures were first made to them from Pretoria, through the medium of Mr. Lippert and Dr. Leyds.

Whatever may have been the intentions of Mr. Kruger and his advisers (and there is every reason to believe that they were honest intentions, inasmuch as Dr. Leyds had brought out a plain intimation that no sort of support

could be expected from any quarter in Europe unless and until the substantial grievances of the mining industry should have been removed), there can be no question whatsoever that the heads of the industry entered into the negotiations with perfect good faith, and if they did not bring them to a satisfactory conclusion, as they might have done, it was owing to representations, from quarters to which attention had perforce to be paid, that a separate settlement would be tantamount to a desertion of the Imperial cause and the betrayal of the *Uitlander* in his relations with the Boer Government. From the moment when the value and extent of the "banket" formation became patent to the world, there were some who declared that the inevitable fate of the mining industry would be to find itself ground to pieces between the upper and the nether millstone, and the sinister prediction is in evident course of being fulfilled.

CHAPTER XI

WHY SINGLE OUT THE MINES?

THE subject is by no means exhausted; but enough has been said to establish the contention that a great deal more consideration is required before the intelligence and the conscience of the nation can be called upon to endorse the perfectly ferocious intentions which have been avowed by men in high places, who have the reputation not less than the interests of the nation in their trust. It is unfortunate that the hated "capitalists" are largely of foreign origin and still more largely Jews. In view of the prevailing prejudice against everything Continental, a prejudice which seems rapidly to be extending to everything Semitic—as witness the astounding lapse of Sir William Harcourt on a recent occasion—the interests at which it is desired to strike a blow appear to think discretion the better part of valour and do not at present raise their voice. I venture to raise mine in the conviction that considerations exist which the good sense and right feeling of my countrymen will not refuse to entertain if they are brought to their notice, in the hope that it is not even yet too late to prevent the nation being committed, through Parliament, to a position which has been altogether too rashly taken up.

It might appear unpatriotic to press the point that the war could not possibly have proved such a formid-

able affair if our army had been up to a moderate standard of efficiency, if our men had been able to shoot, if we had profited by the teaching of such masters of their art as Gordon and Chesney, if we had not been content to live upon our prestige and our isolation, if unmounted men had not been preferred, if men had never slept upon their posts and generals had never blundered; but there is nothing unpatriotic in asking why, if England is really determined to shift the burden, or a considerable portion of it, from her shoulders, it should be laid exclusively upon the wealth, *i.e.* the mineral wealth, of the Transvaal.

If it had been determined to leave the opposing states intact, an adequate indemnity for the wanton invasion of British territory might well have been put in the forefront amongst the terms of peace; but since we are not leaving them intact, the argument appears to be unanswerable that with annexation the penalty should be complete. Is it to be said that England will be less generous to the *Uitlanders*, who are largely of her own flesh and blood, than America has been to the Cubans, who are alien in every sense of the word? Yet they are not required to pay the cost of their liberation. They do not even start upon their new career saddled with the debts which the Mother country incurred on their behalf in respect even of matters other than the maintenance of her rule.

If, however, England is not content to set her new territories (with all the advantages, immediate and remote, of this extension of her dominions) against the cost of their acquisition, it still becomes necessary to consider why the proposed exaction should be confined, as some appear anxious to confine it, to the mining industry of

the Transvaal. The very suggestion is in itself conclusive evidence of the vindictive character of the proposal. It is plainly intended as a punishment for being rich—there is not wanting an element of the ridiculous, however, in the suggestion that everybody must needs be a millionaire who is fractionally interested in the wealth of the Transvaal—a punishment for being Hebrew, a punishment for being foreign, a punishment for "provocation" and "instigation" that exist, except in the instances already pointed out, only in the disordered imagination of those who persist in keeping their ears closed to plain historic facts.

The Boers, it is true, together with an extreme section of the Liberal party, have never wearied of declaring that the war was brought about by capitalists for the basest of motives. The Boers, however, knew that capitalist and mine-owner were not terms connoting the same idea. They would, moreover, be the first to admit that there are capitalists and capitalists, and that what they, rightly or wrongly, hold to be true of A, B, and C, would be hideously unjust if alleged with respect to D, E, and F. Furthermore, the emphasis with which the charge has been repudiated in its entirety by Sir Alfred Milner, whose evidence on a matter of fact cannot well be disregarded by the nation whose servant he is, renders it peculiarly intolerable that the attempt to justify the hostile intentions which have been so freely announced should be based upon such unsubstantial grounds. The language of every Minister of the Crown who has addressed himself to the question has been not less explicit; but the threat to squeeze the industry for the relief of the British taxpayer still remains.

This menace would be hard to justify in any case,

directed, as it is, against those whose grievances the nation took it upon itself to redress; whose losses, without hope of compensation, are already ruinous in amount. It is simply unthinkable, in face of the fact that while England, in the expressive language of Kaffir diplomacy, was "still talking," the summons to mortal combat came from the hand of Mr. Kruger and Mr. Steyn. If the historic events which led up to the war are not to be set aside, it is clear that England herself must be prepared to "foot the bill" which the production of this lamentable tragedy involves; if they are, and the conflict is to be judged in its narrowest aspect, it is not less clear that the Boers must be regarded as the actual authors of the war, and on their heads it is that the consequences should devolve. They it is who have slain thousands of her Majesty's subjects, wantonly invaded her territories, imperilled her empire, and rendered necessary the expenditure of blood and treasure which is now so much deplored.

The sole offence of the *Uitlanders* at worst, and even in that the "wealth of the Transvaal" cannot fairly be said to have had much of a hand, consisted in the presentation of a respectfully worded petition to the Queen. Thirty or forty millions sterling would seem to be an excessive price to pay for so much temerity.

Nowhere is it suggested that the Boers, who were careful to contribute nothing to the revenue as long as they had the ruling of the roast, shall bear any substantial share of the public burdens, and more especially the cost of the war, under the new régime. On the contrary, it is calmly proposed, even by such a temperate organ of public opinion as the *Westminster Gazette*, that the mines shall not only bear a considerable portion of the cost

incurred by England, but shall actually be taxed for the purpose of rebuilding the Boer homesteads and re-stocking the Boer farms!

A British subject, who was confiding enough to think that the Queen's residuary jurisdiction over the Transvaal, as expressed in the Conventions, together with England's claims to be the paramount power, ensured to him some measure of special protection, is to have his claims dismissed with the curt admonition that if he chose to give hostages to a foreign state he did it at his own risk; but Boers who deliberately staked their all upon a contest for ascendency that they failed to gain are to be allowed to retire from the conflict, when they have had quite enough of it, no worse than they went in—at least such would be the case if Mr. Chamberlain, with all his faults, did not scout the utterly monstrous proposal that our foes should be treated better than our friends.

I trust I am not less free from racial prejudice than the authors of this outrageous suggestion, which partakes of the character of midsummer madness, but I have yet to learn why real estate in the Transvaal should not bear its due quota in common with the mines; why the land and the mines of the Free State, whose participation in the fray was wholly gratuitous, should go exempt; why the wealthy Boer should not pay as well as the ruined *Uitlander;* why the Cape and Natal should not be assessed in due proportion at least to the extent to which they have contributed to our difficulties.

Both these colonies have fattened upon the war. One of their prime ministers was wholly responsible for the Raid, while another thought it consistent with his duty to Queen and empire to insist upon an "attitude of neutrality" being observed at a time when a prompt and

outspoken appeal to the still unshaken loyalty of the great mass of the colonists would have brought forth invaluable assistance in the task of rolling the tide of invasion back.

The attitude of the colonies towards the republics has long been utterly shameless in its undisguised selfishness. The toll levied in the way of transit duties and excessive railway charges was nearly double the burden of the dynamite monopoly of which we have heard so much; but the very acme of brazen audacity was surely reached when the Leaguesmen and their allies sent home their precious deputation to assure Mr. Chamberlain of colonial support in exacting from the Boer states a considerable proportion of the sum expended upon their conquest.

CHAPTER XII

NO MORE EXPEDIENT THAN JUST

The argument drawn from the precedent of the United States relates rather to the expediency of the proposed exaction than to its justice; but it is, perhaps, none the less cogent for that. England cannot call upon South Africa, or upon any portion of South Africa, to recoup her expenditure in and about this war without violating the principle for which we contended against the American colonies and failed. Any contribution imposed upon the "wealth of the Transvaal," whether by resolution of the House of Commons or by vote of a bogus Colonial Parliament formed on the model of Jamaica, Trinidad, or Ceylon, would be a tax imposed for the relief and, therefore, for the benefit of the British tax-payer; and it must not for a moment be thought that, because certain irresponsible persons (arrogating to themselves the right to speak for others, with whose power of attorney they have never yet been entrusted) are ignorant of this fundamental principle or insensible to its importance, or because it is not generally pushed to the forefront at the present juncture, South Africa at large, or the Transvaal in particular, will meekly acquiesce in its being trampled under foot.

Mutterings may be already heard of the coming storm; but what is at present a cloud no bigger than a man's hand may easily assume the most threatening proportions.

The hold which England has upon South Africa at large is not so strong that what would be regarded by the mass of the people as a distinctly improper and tyrannical exercise of Imperial power would fail to shake it. Paradoxical as it may appear, the union of the races is probably the nearest at hand when they seem the furthest apart. Whatever else may be the outcome of the war, it will not result in the suppression of Afrikander feeling. Its presence can be noted, and it is struggling to be uppermost, even in the hearts and minds of those colonists of English origin who believe, for the time being, that they really hate every Dutchman, and that they are English with the same kind and degree of devotion to this little island as though they had never strayed beyond the sound of Big Ben at Westminster. There is a *genius loci* which must ultimately prove a stronger and more abiding influence even than distinctions of race. Moments have already been when this sentiment has seemed to dominate the other. As to the mass of the people its conquest was long since complete. It is the Krugers, vainly striving after a Dutch ascendency, or the Rhodeses, ever in pursuit of a false ideal, that have kept the racial flame alive.

"Africa for the Afrikanders"—not in the sense of exclusiveness, but in the sense that local questions must be locally settled—is an ever-growing idea, notwithstanding constantly recurring set-backs and shocks; it will have more and not less potency in the new century than it has exercised in the old. With that idea England will have to reckon, as she has already to reckon with Canadian and Australian feeling to an extent that makes her sovereignty in those cases little more than nominal.

What has hitherto stood in the way of the perfect fruition of the Afrikander idea has been the feeling on the part of the Dutch that the English were able to command such unlimited reinforcements of numbers that they stood in perpetual danger of being swamped. They stood in especial dread of being overwhelmed by a rush that would partake of the character of a devastating flood, receding from their shores almost as soon as its evil work was done, and leaving nothing but gigantic wreck behind. Isolation was the one essential condition under which their separate identity could be preserved. That, too, was the secret of their refusal to grant the English language in the Transvaal the same rights as the Dutch language enjoyed at the Cape. Feeling the need of artificial props, they were not prepared to carry their republican principles to the length of saying that they must do without them.

Some there were amongst the Boers, it is true, who could not get away from the idea that, as they were no parties to the original cession, South Africa was rightly their exclusive heritage, and all subsequent arrivals who did not permit themselves to be absorbed, as the Huguenots had done, must remain for ever in the category of *Uitlanders* and interlopers. The war, while it will not have the effect of extirpating the more liberal Afrikander idea, which is based upon daily intercourse and community of interests, will undoubtedly compel these extremists to relinquish their impossible standards. This they have only to do, and to extend their horizon so far as to bring within the range of orthodoxy the English Afrikander as well as the Dutch, and it is not too lightly to be presumed that their advances would be for any length of time resisted.

It would not be the part of England, even if it were in her power, to oppose the growth of a sentiment which is not of necessity incompatible with the sole kind of dominion that she cares to exercise. While, however, she may be able to influence the evolution of the Afrikander idea in a direction favourable to herself, retaining the affections of her own children and winning back those of the Dutch, she has only to keep on her course of never-ending blunders, and it requires no prophet to foretell that she will at length succeed in alienating them one and all. Will she, then, weld the disjointed fragments together in loving recognition of her maternal care or in resistance to unwise demands and utterly mistaken views as to the means by which the ends she has in view may be best promoted?

This is a question which weighs with an ever-increasing burden upon the hearts and minds of those who find themselves unable to share in the cheery optimism which can picture to itself nothing but eternal peace, universal devotion to the British connection, and bounding prosperity when once the war is ended. Without going so far as to affirm that England cannot cast upon South Africa any portion of the war-bill without causing those who are now loyal to make common cause with those who are disloyal, it would be affectation to deny that she cannot afford to add to the numbers of the disaffected. If she is not prepared to drain the life's blood of the nation by the maintenance of a large army of occupation for an indefinite term, an army so large that even the most lavish estimates framed up to the present time would have to be revised, she must exercise her rights as conqueror in such manner that all latent and potential hostility to her rule will tend constantly to the minimum,

and not in the other direction. Never will she attain to this desirable state of affairs by excluding, "perhaps even for generations," all local elements, or any large section of the community, from effective voice in the government, or by antagonising that particular section of the community to which she must look for steady and spontaneous support.

One of the most fruitful sources of the innumerable errors that have been made in recent years, as of the misconceptions that still prevail in this country with respect to some of the essential features of the South African situation, has been the readiness to accord a representative character to men, and to women too, for that matter, who were merely hungering for some sort of personal advertisement, or had axes of their own to grind. Late in the day, too late to prevent the commission of many an irreparable mistake, the discovery is made that it is difficult to obtain the truth about South Africa; but it would not be difficult if public opinion were as sound as I think it used to be, when it could bear to be told the unpalatable veracity, but would not suffer the most agreeable lie. There is no occasion to particularise; but instances will occur to the mind of every reader when the public judgment was snatched upon representations which were soon discovered to be absolutely false. Communities are not infrequently represented as satisfied when the truth is that individuals only have been silenced or "squared." Kimberley in its turn, and still more recently Johannesburg, Bulawayo and Salisbury, have been especial victims of this species of misrepresentation; but those who claim in future to take action on behalf of Johannesburg, or to speak in its name, had better be quite sure of their

mandate, or they may find themselves disavowed with more emphasis than consideration for their self-esteem. The Johannesburg of the future will bear but a very distant resemblance to the Johannesburg of the past, and it will certainly not permit itself to be dragged so readily as it has been at anybody's chariot wheels.

CHAPTER XIII

IMPRACTICABLE AS WELL

It is clear that there is but one condition upon which the Boer stakes can cease to be a perpetual drag upon the Empire. Concurrently with the endeavours to conciliate those who at present seem to be beyond the reach of conciliation, there must be a resolute and sustained effort to infuse into the population of those territories a very large number of settlers whose soundness is undoubted as loyal subjects of the Queen.

Under the circumstances that exist, no Government can hope to accomplish this purpose unaided. Assistance from the Dutch, in giving effect to an idea which they will recognise as the death-knell of their nationalistic aspirations, may be dismissed as something beyond the region of practical politics. The cordial co-operation of those who are connected with the mining industry can scarcely be looked for, poor human nature being what it is, if that industry be started on its new career handicapped not only with the greatly enhanced administrative charges that will be found inseparable from what has taken place, but with an annual tribute to be paid to this country in respect of the war.

The idea that the profits of mining will be considerably augmented under British rule originated with

eminent authorities who to-day would be the first to admit that their forecasts were altogether too previous. There is, indeed, too much reason to apprehend that, for many years at all events, they will be not greater, but substantially less. This, however, cannot be allowed to happen, otherwise the properties which have never been within the "margin of cultivation" will still remain unworked; properties which have been upon the verge will have to be shut down; even the richer mines will languish; the country will fail to attract a new population; and the difficulties of governing it will be intensified to an incalculable extent.

It thus appears not only unjust, but highly impolitic and practically impossible, to carry into execution the determination upon which all parties are apparently agreed. Granted that it was a natural resolution to take in the first flush of public mortification: shall we persevere to the end, lest some one should say we had turned back, although it is impossible to deny that we cannot go forward without committing the nation to an act as unwise as it would be indefensible, as certain to be visited with evil consequences—descending, perhaps, even more heavily upon those who come after us than upon ourselves—as any that has been committed in the whole course of our relations with a country in which it is abundantly clear that the errors of one generation have to be paid for with compound interest by the next?

For much that has happened in the past it has been possible to plead that governments and parliaments did not at any rate sin against the light. Things have happened in South Africa—such, for instance, as the discovery, first of diamonds and then of gold—that not even the

shrewdest could foresee, and there may be surprises of no less importance yet in store; but the plea of the unexpected will scarcely be able to cover the consequences of the cardinal errors it is now proposed to commit, errors which will probably appear to succeeding generations as little less than crimes.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

[November 1900]

WHY "KAFFIRS" ARE DULL

THE CASE FOR THE MINES

I DO not share the view that there is anything mysterious about the dulness of the Kaffir market. On the contrary, the reasons appear to me to be patent on the face of things. Some are general in their character while some are special. Kaffirs, to begin with, are dull in common with all other sections of the market, and that general inactivity dates from, and must be attributed to, the danger signal that Lord Salisbury exhibited to a distinguished company of bankers a few months ago. You cannot expect that people will go on their way as though nothing had happened when the Prime Minister declares that we are hated of all nations and must be prepared to meet the onslaught of all the military Powers of the Continent combined. The explosion has to occur, or Lord Salisbury must announce that the danger of it has passed away, before any real revival of activity in speculation can be expected. It was well that Lord Salisbury had a reputation for constitutional pessimism. The danger was regarded as remote, and panic-stricken holders consequently did not tumble over one another in frantic haste to convert their paper into cash; but they have studiously refrained from that day to this—some with a conscious knowledge of the predisposing cause of their inaction, some unconsciously—from converting their cash into any paper except the very best

It is one of the curiosities of current politics that a Government whose chief has dealt such a swashing blow to business as the speech I call to mind—to say nothing of minor inflictions innumerable—should still be acclaimed in the City as the only saviours of the country, and especially of that choice fragment of the country that centres upon Throgmorton Street. Whatever else the merits of the Unionist Government may be, it certainly cannot be claimed for them that their term of office has been coincident, as we were assured it would be, with a period of abounding prosperity in speculation and finance. Granting that what has happened was their misfortune rather than their fault, still we must remember that it was no canting philosopher, but the head of the first financial house in the world, who made it a rule of conduct that the always unfortunate man was more to be avoided than the biggest sinner in the City—if the owner of a distinction for which there must be so many competitors could possibly be found.

The special causes which help to account for the deadly dulness of the mining market appear to be no less obvious than the general cause already mentioned. Here, too, you may perceive the effects of shock. When the Jameson Raid failed, the "magnates" who had the principal hand in the engineering of that insane enterprise found themselves confronted with a situation they had little expected. The strain proved too much for them and their following, and it took them at least eighteen months to recover their equanimity. They had barely got into swing again when they were overtaken afresh by another and still more critical occasion. If they did not promote the war as they promoted the Raid, if they did not actually court it, some of them at least

were indifferent to its occurrence, because they had formed certain very definite conclusions with regard to its incidents, its duration, its outcome and its cost. These conclusions have been mainly falsified in the event, and while the eminent firms have been looking on the moving scene in amaze and wonderment, the market has been left to fluctuate within certain limits as it listed. The time has now come when the big players might, perhaps, be expected to resume their seats; but the aspect of the whole table is so little to their liking that they consistently remain away. Should that be regarded as such an inexplicable circumstance after all? With one eye they perceive stocks at a level which leaves but little scope for the exercise of even the most sanguine imagination, with the other they picture to themselves the present and prospective state of the country in which the industry is carried on, and it says something for their innate benevolence that they take no advantage of the unbounded confidence in the future with which a public not so well informed as themselves is transparently inspired.

It is rightly insisted by the *Financial Times* that political considerations have always exerted a very special influence upon the course of business in the Kaffir market. The expectation of escape from this baneful influence is clearly not to be realised the moment the curtain rings down upon the war. On the contrary, there never was a moment when it was more important to consider values in the light of political conditions than it is to-day, and it is light of that description which is, unfortunately, most wanting. The elections have done nothing to relieve the obscurity of the situation. Candidates of all parties seem to have

set out on their campaign with one stereotyped formula —annex the Republics and make the mines pay the bill—and with that crude and unsatisfying outline of a policy the sovereign people are apparently content. The protest of all Dutch South Africa is to be disregarded, and I have nothing here to say to that; it remains to be seen whether an equal indifference will be shown to the protest of the mines. In the estimation of some thoroughgoing patriots an attitude of protest in this quarter is nothing short of black ingratitude, if, indeed, it is not positive treason to the British cause. A brief consideration of the matter in the light of cold reason should, however, bring these wild extremists to a different frame of mind.

The cost of the war should clearly be borne by those who brought it about and those who will reap whatever benefits may ensue upon its termination. That much must be admitted. Now, many reasons have been assigned for the war. Some attribute it to Mr. Gladstone's pusillanimity after Majuba. The mines can scarcely be held responsible for that. Others maintain that it was a natural and inevitable consequence of the Jameson Raid. Well, if any one thing is certain about that adventure, it is beyond dispute that Johannesburg did its very utmost to prevent it. If we are to believe Mr. Chamberlain, the challenge of the Boers was the direct outcome of the encouragement they received from the Parliamentary Opposition. It would surely be the very acme of absurdity, to say nothing of its rank injustice, if good Tory shareholders in this country and innocent investors in Germany and France were called upon to pay the piper for the unspeakable wickedness of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Dr. Clark. It

is the extremest of extreme Radicals alone who have consistently proclaimed the view that the conflict was enforced upon two unwilling peoples by the machinations of the "capitalists." Not Mr. Chamberlain alone, but several other members of the Cabinet, have indignantly repudiated that rendering of recent history, and it would be an outrage upon their characters for common fairness to suppose that the war will be no sooner over than they will pluck the poisoned shafts from the quiver of Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Burns, and let them fly at the hearts of their dearest friends. Everybody is agreed that, although Mr. Chamberlain was precluded by the Jameson Raid from lodging any protest against Mr. Kruger's armaments, Mr. Kruger would soon have dropped that game if British armaments had proceeded, as more than one organ of the *Uitlander* Press urged that they should, *pari passu* with his own. Everybody is agreed that it was idiotic to poke up the Boers first and delay the military preparations until they had been provoked to a rupture. Everybody is agreed that the military problem was completely misunderstood, and that the war has proved such a formidable task wholly in consequence of fossilism at the War Office and incompetence amongst the generals in the field. For none of these delinquencies, however, can the mines be held in any sense responsible, and we have yet to see whether any Minister responsible for the peace and well-being of South Africa, will be able to reconcile it to his sense of justice to propose that the innocent victims of other people's shortcomings should be made to bear, in addition to the burdens that will devolve upon them in any case, the brunt of these accumulated errors.

While that question is being considered it may be useful to set forth some of the reasons, apart from the mere justice of the matter, why the Government should resist the temptation to which it is no doubt exposed. The most familiar contention that one has to encounter is that several of our own representative men have made any other course impossible. They have put it on record that the change of régime will result in a saving of five or six shillings per ton in the working of the mines. "Are we," it is asked, "not only to rid you of your corrupt oligarchy, but to enrich you to the extent of two or three millions a year for the privilege of doing it?" The question is not so difficult to answer as it may seem to be. Mr. Hammond's famous forecast was not made with adequate knowledge of the factors, without which no reliable estimate could possibly be framed. Not even the omniscience of Mr. J. B. Robinson can tell us what the saving will be, if it be anything at all, until he is permitted to learn the extent to which savings will be offset by new and additional charges. At the time when Mr. Hammond was proclaiming from the house-tops his too previous and ill-matured opinions, he was doubtless under the impression, like many others who presumed to reckon without their host, that the war would prove an inexpensive walk over to an early pacification. All his conclusions would of necessity be vitiated if the mines had to maintain an expensive armed police, numbering ten or twelve thousand men, and to furnish the interest on thirty or forty millions of debt. If one thing be taken with another, and due consideration be accorded to the fact that the ordinary Boer Administration was not dear, while the ordinary Crown Colony Administration is not cheap, it will be found extremely

difficult to make out the case that the change of Government will involve any financial advantage to the mines. For myself, I shall be well content if my dividends remain the same. I shall require actual experience to convince me that they will remain unaffected, if the popular policy of piling on the burdens should form a portion of the settlement which has yet to be disclosed.

There is, furthermore, a reason of the most cogent character why the Imperial Government should take a broad and liberal view of its policy in this direction. The one point of agreement, even amongst those who differ most widely as to the merits of the war, is that military operations must be followed up by measures that will make war impossible in the time to come. Disarmament and disfranchisement, expedients which are but partial in their character, and more or less temporary in their operation, will not alone suffice. After what has happened, the Dutch of all sections may accept the situation that South Africa is to remain a portion of the British Empire, but they will not accept the situation that they are not to be supreme in South Africa until they realise that the numerical preponderance has passed over to the other side. The two cardinal and concurrent aims of any policy worthy of our character for statesmanship must, therefore, be the conciliation of the Dutch and the reinforcement of the British element in the population. It would be difficult to say which is the more important of these objects. It is not, however, the means of conciliation that I wish to dwell upon here. That is an object that will not be attained in a day or by any one striking decision. It depends as much upon men as upon measures, but the redress of the present inequality of numbers as between English and Dutch depends upon

measures alone. As we are not to rely permanently upon military force for the maintenance of our position, it is the civil population that must be largely augmented, and that augmentation will require the full measure of all the surplus revenues the new Administration may be able to command. The most obvious means of attaining the end in view would be to make a settlement of loyal colonists upon the land. If, however, it be the case—and this is the conclusion that is being slowly forced even upon those who are most reluctant to accept it—that suitable colonists are not likely to be forthcoming in adequate numbers, while it is, to say the least, doubtful whether the right sort of land in the right localities will be found available, then it becomes necessary to discard the idea that the problem is so simple that we have only to go right ahead upon certain straight and well-defined lines and its early and satisfactory solution is assured.

The inquiries which have been already prosecuted seem to necessitate the conclusion that the Dutch are in possession of all the more desirable areas, and that what has happened will not result in their hold upon them being loosened. Furthermore, the conditions of soil and climate are such that agriculture for export purposes is practically out of the question. Local demands are comparatively small and easily satisfied. New markets would have to be created, new means of distribution devised, the whole body of the urban populations converted from predilections for free trade to a policy of extreme, if temporary, protection for local industries before agriculture could be placed upon such a footing as to render it sufficiently attractive for the purpose in view. The scarcity and dearness of labour has been for long years a great barrier in the way of successful agri-

culture. The attitude of the Dutch farmer is not rebellious primarily against the British connection, but against the whole scheme of development with which the British connection is associated. We take away his labour for our mines; we destroy one of his principal means of livelihood by our railways, and then we gird at him for being poor, and revile him because he exhibits no conspicuous increase in the produce of his land. A British settler would be the slave of his environment equally with the Boer. For a generation at least he would be under the added disadvantage of unfamiliarity with local conditions. Nothing would avail in the effort to establish himself short of an abundance of cheap native labour and good markets for his produce when raised. It is this element in the situation that will now come to the fore with a bound; it has an intimate bearing upon the value of Transvaal mining stocks, as all must perceive who have given any thought to the matter.

When the diagnosis is wrong the patient is not likely to derive much benefit from the nostrums prescribed for him. In my view the diagnosis of the South African disease has been erroneous for the past twenty years. It has been treated throughout as though it were purely a political disorder, arising from the special element of original sin supposed to be found in the composition of the Dutch, as it is also supposed to be met with in the Irish. As a fact, the malady is economic rather than political, and the failure of our public men to perceive its real character is to be attributed to that lofty air which seems ever to stand in the way of a real attempt to put ourselves in the other fellow's place. If we did that we should probably perceive that the blame was not wholly upon the other fellow's side. When the building of

railways on an extensive scale was commenced, the customary protest from the rural Dutch was not that they objected to railways in themselves, although their land was expropriated without any pretence of compensation—just imagine what an uproar we should have in this country if railways were permitted to go where they liked and take what they pleased without a due solatium to the owners of the land through which they passed!—but that they objected to the loss of half their native labour and the demoralisation of what remained. A vague sort of understanding was arrived at that foreign navvies should be imported for the purpose of constructing the lines; but the Bills were no sooner passed than that understanding was invariably ignored. The apprehensions of the farmers have been realised to the full, and if agriculture is in a bad way to-day—as undoubtedly it is—it is because the price of unskilled labour has been continually going up, while the value of produce has been continually going down.

The railways, however, have been comparatively minor sinners in this regard. The arch offenders are, of course, the various mines. They have drawn away their thousands from agricultural pursuits where hundreds have left the farms for work on the iron roads. If I were a statesman, charged with the duty of conciliating the Dutch, I should commence with an effort to restore the golden age when every farmer had native labour enough and to spare, and had not to pay prohibitive prices for it. It will be urged, of course, that not even the most skilful of statesmen could conjure up native labourers from the vasty deep. That is so; but if native labour were released from other occupations, it would naturally gravitate towards the land. We are always saying that we

want South Africa to be a white man's country, within the limits that Nature allows; but when it comes to measures for giving practical effect to our wishes, we find no end of reasons for not adopting them. There is really no valid reason why all the work in connection with railways, construction as well as exploitation, should not be performed by white men alone. The contention is that white labour is too dear; but these things react upon one another. White labour is dear because living is expensive, and living is expensive because the new-comers who have started the various industries which have had their origin during the past thirty years have done little or nothing towards the introduction of the requisite labour, but have entered into an unnatural competition with the farmer and made it impossible for him to do justice either to himself or his land. All sound policy must be subservient to the fundamental truth that the first call upon the indigenous labour of any country is the requisition of the farmer for the tillage of the soil.

The competition of the mines, as already observed, is even more fierce than that of the railways. It is thirty years since digging for diamonds was first commenced in Griqualand West; but Kimberley remains a "camp," as distinguished from a town, to this very day. I suppose there are not far short of 15,000 Kaffirs employed in and about the mines. There is no reason in the nature of things why all this work should not be performed by white men. The argument as to cost has no real validity here. Let it be granted that the substitution of white labour for black would enhance the cost. The South African diamond mines have a monopoly of the markets of the world. They could add to the selling price of diamonds in the rough the

difference between the cost of white labour and that of black, and the result, so far as their profits are concerned, would be just the same. That much, indeed, is admitted. The real reason for the preference that Mr. Rhodes accords to black labour over white is twofold. White men will not submit to be compounded or to be searched; white men have votes. If they formed the whole body of the labourers, they would probably be difficult to control. While they are comparatively few and highly paid, forming a sort of aristocracy of labour, they are content to place their political influence at the disposal of their employers, voting in accordance with the unreserved suggestions they receive from time to time. I am not concerned to argue now whether anybody else in the place of Mr. Rhodes would not do as Mr. Rhodes does. I wish merely to indicate why he does it and to prompt an inquiry on the part of his countrymen at home, who now have such an overwhelming interest in the general well-being of South Africa, whether the reasons suffice for the further continuance of a policy which I have always held to be vicious in all its essentials, economic and political as well. Sooner or later the diamond mines will be exhausted. They will have contributed to the State nothing in the form of a royalty; they will leave nothing behind them in the shape of adjunct and associated industries which they helped to establish—nothing, that is, unless there should be a man in the new order who will see to it that Kimberley, in the years that remain to it, performs its proper part.

Arguments which apply to the diamond mines do not of necessity hold good in the case of gold and the baser minerals. You can get no more and no less for

an ounce of gold or a ton of copper, whether the labour employed in raising it be white, black, yellow, or brown; but we are helped to some conclusion on the subject now in issue if we ask ourselves whether the mines on the Rand, for example, would have been worked, and worked profitably too, if perchance there had not been a Kaffir on the African continent. I have never met the man whose opinion could be presumed to possess any value who ventured to say that he had any doubt upon the subject. It is argued, it is true, that if the native labour were now to be displaced, and white labour were employed, at an average rate of £15 a month, the dividends hitherto derived from the mines would be reduced by one-half. Without careful and impartial investigation, without a certain measure of actual experience besides, I should not be disposed to accept that conclusion, or anything like it. I can see no reason in the nature of things (and it is to the nature of things that we must always come back) why white labour should be more expensive on the Rand, where the surrounding conditions are in so many respects ideal and unique, than it is in Australia, Canada, or the United States. Of course, if governments, employers, and employees conspire together to keep down the numbers of the white labouring population—for here again the cloven hoof of political considerations comes in—if the whole system of employment encourages white and black alike to regard themselves as birds of passage, instead of settlers with homes and surroundings in which they can be content to remain, then you get an artificial condition of things from which no reliable deductions can be drawn. You will never keep native labour on the land so long as

you are continually holding up before its eyes the irresistible bait of the railways and the mines; you will never get white men to acknowledge that there is dignity in any labour from which black men are not practically warned off. The skilled artisan works in Johannesburg with as much vigour and contentment as in any part of the world, but you would not get a white man to touch pick or shovel if he were starving so long as there were black men around who could do the work.

If British conquest of the country is to be made effective, if the farmer of whatever nationality is to be made prosperous, and thus contented, if industrial centres are to be established with populations that will serve as a counterpoise to the overwhelming preponderance of the rural Dutch, we have to change all that. I see by my daily paper that Mr. Rhodes is more clamorous than ever for fresh accessions of native labour for the mines; but the outcry only serves to show once again how capable that great man is of completely misunderstanding the situation. It is not more natives that are wanted at industrial centres, but fewer natives and more white men, unless the generation that will come after us is destined to discover that their fathers strove and fought and paid in vain. It does not require that one should be possessed of local experience to realise how very different the course of South African history would have been if Kimberley had been a town with a settled white population of a hundred thousand souls and Johannesburg with at least a quarter of a million, as might well have been the case if the councils of the several Governments and the leading industries had been differently swayed. The demand

on all sides has been for natives, and ever for more natives, and any one who should predict that this course of conduct would prove politically disastrous and in the end economically disadvantageous as well, was as one crying in the wilderness, and was only laughed at for his pains. The situation has now, however, to be revised. There is no escape from that revision. The influences that will dominate British policy in South Africa are distinctly hostile to a continuance of anything like the present state of things, and "Kaffirs are dull" because the leaders of the industry, perceiving all this, will remain in a state of semi-paralysis (at all events, so far as the market is concerned) until they learn what is going to happen with regard to these big fundamental questions and how their interests will be affected thereby. They have got rid of King Log; they are beginning to grow uneasy about the aspect of King Stork. With intelligent anticipation they perceive that they will shortly be compelled to make some momentous decisions. If they are cast between the two alternatives of maintaining a standing force that will cost from two to three millions per annum and revolutionary changes in the industry that would reduce that charge to a minimum, solve the question once for all as to the numerical inequality of the races and give an utterly new impress to the country as a whole, they might conceivably elect to make some sacrifice on the altar of the higher patriotism, and then we should be in for a very big experiment indeed.

According to reports that are current in circles which may or may not be well informed, not only has the decision been taken that the mines shall pay, but the method of exaction is already prescribed. The

Government, it is argued, do not wish to place us in a position in which we shall be worse off as regards our industry than we were before the war. Public opinion, on the other hand, would never tolerate that we should make a profit out of the sacrifices of the British tax-payer, or that we should be any better off except as regards the flag. The measure of our savings, therefore, is to be the measure of the new charges in respect of our share of the expenses of the war. The five-shillings-per-ton theorists are to be taken at their word. The impost, it is proposed, should take the form of a royalty upon the gold won, and inasmuch as it is desired to encourage the low-grade mines at the expense, if need be, of those of higher grade, the substantive proposal is that the royalty should vary, according to grade of ore, from 5 to 10 per cent., with an average of $7\frac{1}{2}$. For the reasons set forth in the earlier portion of this article, I take exception altogether to the idea that the mines should be specially charged with any portion of the Imperial war bill; but, assuming that the cosmopolitan proprietors have to yield to *force majeure*, it might at least be considered whether the ends of justice and of policy would not be alike promoted by the remission of the royalty in the case of mines where none but European (I had almost said none but British) labour was employed. The State would lose the royalty, it is true, but it would gain in the number of its loyal supporters; it would gain in indirect taxation and reduced expenditure upon the forces more than it lost by the remission proposed. The mines, it may be, would have to pay more in the first place for their labour; but if they were absolved from war charges, if supplies were cheapened as they would be by the relegation of native

labour to the farms, if the armed force were reduced to a minimum, as it would be with the influx of an army of loyal white labourers, they would probably find themselves as well off at the end of the year as though they had adhered to the unpatriotic, the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy they have hitherto pursued.

It is matter for infinite regret that so many questions affecting the well-being of South Africa will have to be disposed of by a Parliament in which so little that is representative of South Africa will be found. Twelve candidates who were qualified by reason of long residence, intimate connection or extensive interests, to speak with some authority on South African affairs offered themselves for the judgment of the constituencies. With two exceptions only, the sovereign people would have none of them. This contemptuous rejection may be a way of dissembling that ardent love for the colonies which it is now so much the fashion to profess, or it may be a way of saying that the sovereign people is sick of South Africa, and would like to serve it as it has often been desired to serve a neighbouring island; but it is unfortunate, none the less. Look at it how you will, the great catastrophe was the outcome of lamentable ignorance in Parliament of the figures, facts and feelings by which the problem was conditioned, and since there is abundant room for fresh errors in the same direction, it seems deplorable, to say the least, that men with claims to special knowledge should have been so deliberately rejected. There is much, indeed, to give pause even to the most optimistic whose fancy may lead him in the direction of his broker's office at the present time. When we hear from the lips of Mr. Chamberlain that

the Government he intends to set up will conform to the well-known type with which we are familiar in Jamaica, Trinidad, and Ceylon, our eagerness to possess ourselves of £1 shares at a premium of £40 may prove not impossible to restrain. With that barometrical counter, Rand Mines, all the other Kaffirs automatically rise and fall.

THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

[August 1900]

CHAPTER I

THE CLEAN SLATE

THE subjugation of the Boers has proved a more serious undertaking than was ever anticipated, even by those who thought, as I did a year ago, that the physical obstacles and the resistance to be encountered were greatly underrated in this country. The cheerful optimists who regarded it as "a walk over to annexation" have been hiding their diminished heads for the better part of an eventful twelve months; but there is some reason for believing that they are now sufficiently chastened to listen to the voices of reason and experience which they thought it the correct thing to stifle when the war began. Some of them, at any rate, are prepared to allow that deprecation of the war may not have been dictated in all cases by a lack of sympathy with the *Uitlanders*, by factious opposition to Mr. Chamberlain, or by unpatriotic sympathy with the Queen's enemies; it may, indeed, have been inspired by an anticipation, more or less intelligent, of what was about to occur. The "croakers" who declared in their dismal way that the war would cost us twenty millions of money and ten thousand men, and would not be over in less than six months, have for some time past been able to enjoy the melancholy satisfaction of feeling surprised at their own moderation; and the end is not yet.

The most fanatical Jingo in the land would have

demanded that his Government should walk more warily, more carefully consider whether the game was worth the candle, if he had been able to foresee all that the war upon which he was entering with so light a heart was going to involve. The spirit of the nation has proved itself magnificent beyond all question; but is there an Englishman worthy of the name who is not sickened with the never-ending sacrifice of our bravest and our best, who does not feel humiliated by the inefficiency of our arms, who is not irritated and alarmed by the consequential effects of the entanglement, who does not begin to perceive that the war was "bad business" even if nothing more could be said against it? We know what the immediate charge to the Imperial Exchequer has already been. We have yet to ascertain the cost to the Transvaal, to the Free State, to Natal, to the Cape, to Rhodesia, the compensation that has yet to be paid in cases where compensation can be claimed, the value of the public property destroyed. The full extent of the loss sustained by private individuals we shall never know. If all these items could, however, be rolled together into one scale, and all the gold and diamonds that South Africa has yet produced could be placed in the other, it would be interesting to learn which side of the account would be first to kick the beam.

The only answer we get to reflections of this character is that the war was "inevitable." From a certain moment the proposition need not be gainsaid. The difficulty is to agree upon the moment. It was inevitable, beyond all question, from the unhappy moment when Mr. Kruger launched his misguided ultimatum. It may have been inevitable from Majuba, from the discovery of gold, from the day when Mr. Kruger thought he

could stem the Atlantic by the enactments of his Volksraad, from the hour when Dr. Leyds was sent to Europe to work up Continental feeling against England, from the moment when Mr. Chamberlain entered the Colonial Office, from the Raid. Amongst these numerous alternatives we may all have our choice; but it is clearly either too soon or too late to attempt to decide authoritatively amongst them—too soon to secure the verdict of impartial history, too late to prevent the mischief being done. All that it seems really useful to consider now is what will happen when the inevitable war has come to its inevitable close. In view of the present situation, that may appear to some a question which it is still premature to discuss. The objections to a premature discussion are sufficiently obvious: you should catch your hare before proceeding to cook him. On the other hand, the consequences of a wrong course being followed at this juncture would manifestly be so terrible that these objections must be considered as outweighed in the estimation of those who think they perceive, as I do, a means by which a great threatening error of policy may still be averted.

It was Lord Rosebery, I think, who said, though the remark was not exactly original, that we must trust the man at the helm. That, however, is a counsel of perfection that not all of us can follow in its entirety. We are not all equally ignorant of the salient features of South African history. The Carnarvon policy was launched a quarter of a century ago, with a supreme disregard for local opinion. The Conventions of 1881 and 1884 were both settled without any public discussion beforehand as to their terms; and the results have not, in any one of these cases, been so happy or so

brilliant as to impose a duty of mute acquiescence upon those who perceive how easy it would be, at this critical moment, for the man at the helm to make shipwreck of his bark instead of bringing her safely and triumphantly to port. In other words, I claim to say, on behalf of those who accept the logic of the stricken field, while reserving their opinions upon the policy which has brought things to their present pass, that the plans which have been already adumbrated with respect to the future government of the country are not such as to inspire us with confidence and satisfaction, but rather animate us with a sense of the liveliest apprehension and dismay. I propose not only to show in what respects the Downing Street programme is open to objection, but to outline a scheme by which the happiness of South Africa and the legitimate objects of Imperial policy might be more conceivably attained.

Upon the broad essential principles of any settlement we are all agreed. Absolute equality for all white men south of the Zambezi is to be the *sine qua non* of the new conditions. It would, however, be quite a mistake to assume that there is so much of inherent virtue in the principle thus enunciated that the lion will presently be lying down with the lamb, and South Africa will cease from troubling, no matter how that principle may be applied. I am far from thinking, with Mr. Selous and some others, that the war must of necessity result in a state of affairs worse even than that which is to be superseded; and yet it is not to be denied that the task of reconstruction has only to be mishandled, and the next century will receive at the hands of the present such a heritage of woe that the bitterest feelings evoked by Mr. Gladstone's misconception of the situa-

tion in his time will be mild indeed in comparison with the censures that the errors of this present generation will receive at the hands of those who come after us. With the whole country in the melting-pot, however, as to all intents and purposes it now is, it ought not to be beyond the resources of civilisation, as exemplified in our Imperial Statesmanship, to fashion such a new South Africa as should be not less in accord with the genius of its own people than with the imperious necessities of the Empire of which it must form a part.

It was Mr. Kruger, whose motions have been so strangely directed since the present troubles began, that made it possible for Her Majesty's Government to mould the new dominion according to their will. Just as the ultimatum relieved Mr. Chamberlain of the onerous duty of formulating his new proposals, so did Mr. Kruger's preposterous annexation of Bechuanaland, and Mr. Steyn's equally absurd appropriation of Griqualand West and Northern Natal, come as a godsend to Ministers who might otherwise have been embarrassed by the assurances to which they had given spontaneous expression at the beginning of the war. We sought no territory and we craved no gold; but the frowardness of the enemy compels us to take both. The Cape Colony has been not less obliging than the Republics. Whatever compunction there might have been in laying violent hands upon the ark of our covenant with that community, if the Afrikanders had been mindful of their duty as loyal subjects of the Queen, there could not possibly be an equal hesitation in view of the fact that whole districts of the colony, without a single grievance of their own, went into open rebellion, while the attitude of others was only to be distinguished from rebellion

by the turning of a blind eye to plain and indubitable facts.

For some years past the rule of the minority over the majority has been the distinguishing characteristic of the Cape, and that state of affairs was tolerable only so long as the minority kept within the bounds which practical loyalty to the British connection imposes. When the dominant faction openly espouses the cause of the Queen's enemies, the time has clearly come, since the Imperial factor will not consent to its own elimination, when existing relations must be overhauled, when ampler guarantees must be sought against a contingency to which we have been brought so perilously near. The temporary disfranchisement of ten thousand rebels taken in arms is but a postponing of the evil day, unless their exclusion from the pale of the Constitution for this brief term of years be regarded as a means to an end. The political fabric into which they will be permitted to enter when the term of their rustication shall have ended ought to be, and must be, something essentially different from the shaky structure they are now being called upon to quit.

The recent change of Ministry at Cape Town, followed by the exceptional legislation which is now in course of enactment, seems to render it superfluous, at the moment, for the Imperial Government to proceed to the extreme lengths of suspending the Colonial Constitution by way of vindicating the Queen's supremacy. That such suspension was lately imminent, and would have been justifiable in the circumstances, cannot well be denied. Those who have cherished the rights of colonial self-government with the most conspicuous ardour, those who have been most jealous of Imperial interference

in realms of action from which Imperial influence had been withdrawn, are fain to confess that the tacit conditions have not been observed, and that some "striking proof" of the Queen's determination not to be ousted from her due authority is just as necessary to be furnished for the edification of rebellious Afrikanders as for that of hostile Boers. It may be convenient that the fiction of preserving the constitutional independence of the colony should not be disturbed; but in substance and in fact that independence has for some months past been as dead as Queen Anne, and in the old form, with the old absence of safeguards, it can never be revived. Sir Gordon Sprigg and his colleagues may conceive themselves what they will; but in the eyes of the rest of the world they are sitting in their offices, not to obey the behests of the more or less fictitious Parliamentary majority, but to arrange with Her Majesty's Government in England the means by which the Queen's supremacy may be more effectually secured.

In effect, if not in outward appearance, Sir Alfred Milner has his clean slate, a slate of larger dimensions, perhaps, than he himself contemplated when he used the memorable phrase a month or two ago, and it behoves us in England to consider what should be written upon it by the Imperial authority, or by the Cape Government at their suggestion, as an all-sufficient evidence of British power, British justice and British good-will. Upon the answer to that question depends, in all human probability, not alone the well-being of South Africa, but the very existence of the Empire in the centuries beyond the one that is now drawing so rapidly towards its close. Apparently it is not seriously proposed by the Colonial Office to write anything in particular upon this interesting

substance now that their High Commissioner has it, or presently will have it, clean and well fashioned to his liking; but they will content themselves, when the military ruler shall have made way for the civilian, with setting up a provisional order and leaving the rest to time! In this way, it is to be feared, a magnificent opportunity will be thrown away; room will be left for doubts where no sort of uncertainty should continue to prevail; and on these doubts an agitation will be founded and sustained that would have no ground to rest upon, or the wherewithal to keep itself alive, if a more decided course should be pursued.

The Crown Colony system, to which the Colonial Office has apparently pledged itself as the mode of administering the Queen's Government in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony for a quite indefinite term, is a hopeless sort of machinery at best and in almost any case; it is dangerous in the highest degree in the cases to which it is proposed to be applied. It is in great favour with persons of the bureaucratic order. It provides them with places, with pensions, with compensation on abolition of office, with decorations to gratify the vanity of their womenfolk and all manner of good things; but no colony ever enjoyed a taste of its blessings, as all our colonies have done in the earlier stages of their history, without an experience to which all sorts and conditions of men, the camp-following of the official element excepted, were heartily glad to say good-bye. Healthy progress is invariably found impossible under the conditions; the free play of public opinion is arrested; conflict between the governing element and the governed is more or less chronic. If this be so, as it is, in cases where there is no element of racial antagonism to ac-

centuate the absence of sympathy between the rulers and the ruled, how much more certain is it that continual friction will prevail when the attempt is made to govern from Downing Street such sturdy recalcitrants as the Boers of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal! Such an attempt is only too likely, seeing that the Ethiop cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, to lead up to desperate resolves rather than to any recognition of the virtues and blessings of British rule.

Extravagant as this apprehension may appear to some, it will not seem so wild to those who are able to discern the knack that history has of repeating itself. It is not even as though we could expect to set off the enthusiasm of the *Uitlander* against the sullen discontent of the Boer. The British in the Transvaal were not less disgusted with the Lanyon administration than the Boers themselves. It was British subjects, most of them less than twenty years from home, who went into open rebellion against the Crown Colony administration of Griqualand West. I can imagine no system of government less suited to the conditions of a mining community than a Crown Colony administration in any shape or form. It would be a fine culmination to a fine business if, a couple of years hence, Boers and *Uitlanders* should be found banded together in efforts to recall the halcyon days of Oom Paul! Stranger things than this have happened ere now, and Africa will not cease to be the land of surprises even when this eventful chapter in its annals shall have reached its close. I can learn of but two men whose opinion goes for much who have given in their adhesion to the Colonial Office programme. One is a shrewd South African politician whose sinister approval is transparent enough; the other is Mr. Rhodes.

His strange notion is that only by this means can the Government of the Transvaal be prevented from falling into the hands of the Johannesburg Jews! Mr. Rhodes has claims to the consideration of his countrymen which I would be the last to minimise or deny; but, in the words of one who should know, he is gifted with a rare capacity for misunderstanding the situation. Events have served to convince even his warmest admirers that sound political judgment is not exactly his strong point. Keep the "Johannesburg Jews" in their place by all means, but not by sacrificing the larger objects to the less, not by the adoption of so dangerous an expedient as that proposed if there exists a more excellent way. In a succeeding chapter I will endeavour to show that a more excellent way is not impossible to find.

CHAPTER II

A WORKING PLAN

EQUAL rights, in the widest significance that so very wide a phrase can imply, have come to be regarded, and rightly so, by those who aim at a regenerated South Africa, as the one indispensable postulate to any tolerable state of affairs; but this postulate alone does not furnish any working plan. It is not enough to say that all white men in South Africa shall be free and equal. That has nominally been the case in the Cape Colony up to the present time. Practical equality, however, has not existed there for a good many years. It is, perhaps, not superfluous to explain how this condition of inequality has come about. The representation of the people was originally settled on the good old conservative lines of allowing to the rural population a larger measure of political influence than their numbers alone would have warranted. The theory upon which this distribution of political power rested was, perhaps, not outrageously opposed to the facts of the case when representative institutions were granted. The farmers alone were rooted to the soil. In their purses and their persons they bore virtually all the burdens of the State. The urban population, relatively few in numbers, was here to-day and gone to-morrow, contented itself with the *rôle* of distribution, and contributed nothing to the revenue save what it filched from the sole producers of tangible wealth.

Volunteer corps were not yet existent. When the regular forces had to be aided in the task of extending the frontiers or maintaining order within the bounds, the burghers rather than the townsfolk were wont to furnish that aid.

Whatever truth there may have been in these assumptions fifty years ago, there is none to-day. Farming, in its various aspects, has been for many years a declining industry, partly for reasons which are not confined to the Cape in their operation and partly because an appreciable number of the more energetic amongst the young Afrikanders have been drawn away, some to the Free State and some to the Transvaal. Meanwhile there has been a steady development of new industries—mining, for example—in which Afrikanders have borne no part. Transport-riding, which used to be a lucrative means of livelihood to the rural Dutch, has been superseded by railways, and the temper of those who have thus found their occupation gone has not improved with the diminution of their fortunes. New townships have sprung up in which the rural influence has been at a minimum, and the element which used to be considered essentially fugitive has gradually made it more and more patent to all whom it concerns that it has come to stay.

While these radical changes have been in progress in one direction, reactionary Afrikanderism has been endeavouring to neutralise their effects by the means political to which the Dutchman in a difficulty is ever prone to have resort. Wherever he could he has shifted the burdens of the State upon the urban population. Wherever he could he has ousted the townsman from all positions of influence and power. Wherever he could he has striven to ignore in practice all suggestions of

the fact that the Cape is an English colony after all. When I first went to South Africa, in the early seventies, it was the usual thing for the country districts to seek their representatives from amongst the men of substance and intelligence in the more populous centres. That idyllic period has long since passed away. The country townships are virtually disfranchised. The representation of the people has steadily degenerated. The Colonial Parliament, which once had a right to be regarded as one of the first deliberative bodies in the empire, has declined to the status of a third-rate county council. No townsman has for years past had much chance of getting himself elected to the Assembly for a country division unless he professed himself more Boer than the Boers, and governed himself accordingly. Here, it may be thought, are sure and certain indications of a conscious design to sever the British connection. That is not the light in which I have been constrained to view these manifestations, but rather as the futile means by which a relatively weak man was endeavouring to stem the advance of an irresistible force with which he had not the good sense to throw himself into line.

The result, however, is the same. A state of things was being developed which was only one degree better than that in the Transvaal, an unnatural state of things that could not well be ended by any means short of insurrection—a British insurrection is what I mean—unless the Imperial authority should intervene. The ordinary processes of conversion, by which minorities transform themselves into majorities, are quite unknown phenomena when the elements of racial antagonism and the first law of nature come in.

It is vain to imagine that all men south of the

Zambezi can be placed upon the same footing unless these radical conditions of inequality that prevail in the Cape Colony can be first removed. Only in one of two ways can they be eradicated. The Afrikander may strike a bargain, surrendering his coign of vantage as part and parcel of a general rearrangement; but now less than ever will he commit the happy despatch. His capacity for passive resistance is to be dreaded not less than the active hostility of the Boer with his Mauser, and there is nothing for it, now that the opportunity has offered, but that the Imperial Government shall either strike this bargain or carry its intervention to such lengths that fair-play all round will become a living reality and not a name.

What has to be kept always in mind is the essential oneness of the whole country. If all the English had lived in the Colonies, and all the Dutch in the Republics, the problem would have been easy enough to solve. There would, indeed, have been no problem. As a fact, however, the two nationalities are intermixed to such an extent by residence, by marriage, and by association in all the relations of civil life, that the country must have one unchallenged master, now that the foundations of the great deep are broken up, and one system only so far as the general polity of the commonwealth is concerned. The alternative is a continuance of the civil war, more or less veiled throughout the present century, but raging with all its horrors and its difficulties during the past twelve months.

Political unity is, therefore, the *sine qua non* to stable prosperity and peace. That unity, according to the prevalent notion, can only be secured by the adoption of the federal system; but those who happen to know what

a game of pull-devil, pull-baker it has been for the past quarter of a century, whenever an effort has been made in that direction, can entertain no genuine hope of anything being effected in our time by the means that have been employed with such happy results in the case of British North America and in that of the Australian Colonies. The war is a great fact that had no parallel in either of those cases, and the ordeal of passing under the yoke will not make our Dutchman more ready in the future than he has been in the past to forward any project which it may suit Imperial policy to suggest. Federation by consent may, therefore, be at once dismissed as an idle dream. Can the true aims of a broad and far-seeing policy be achieved by any other means?

In considering this question, I start with the assumption that any policy must be dismissed as radically unsound that contains no distinct promise of yielding as its fruits a reconciled South Africa and a secure Imperial position. The Crown Colony policy seems to me to afford no prospect of our attaining either of those ends. I ask myself what the Boer will most dread as the worst evil that can possibly befall him when he has to settle down under the new régime; and I have no hesitation in saying that the status of a Crown Colony, as the Transvaal was in the five years succeeding the former annexation, would be regarded by every patriotic burgher as more intolerable even than a military despotism, as the very lowest depth of degradation to which his country could possibly descend. What, on the other hand, would be regarded by the vanquished enemy as the most tolerable arrangement that could in the circumstances be made in his behalf? I have no less confidence in affirm-

ing that the annexation of the Republics to the Cape Colony, and the extension to them of the colonial system of self-government, modified in the manner already suggested, would soften the blow to an extent which can, perhaps, be scarcely understood by those who possess but a partial comprehension of the nature of the case. This absorption would ensure the complete extinction of the Republics by the most effectual and the least unwelcome means. It would compel the sympathy of the Cape Afrikanders; it would enlist their interest in the endeavour to reconcile the Boer to the new order of things; and they would be found, if properly approached, not unwilling to pay an adequate price for an arrangement in which the penalties of conquest and rebellion would be reduced to a minimum.

The price is not difficult to determine. It has been already indicated how very far the old colony has travelled along the road that has brought the Transvaal to such unutterable grief, and there is not an Afrikander in the Cape, with his eyes wide opened, as they now must be, to the folly and danger of treating the Imperial authority with contempt, and setting at defiance the principles of genuine equality on which the system of colonial self-government is founded, who would not in his heart be glad of the opportunity of making a new start upon new lines. Handled as though he were a mule, he will doubtless show himself mulish. Called upon to join in a common effort to make things tolerable all round, he would not contest or deny the right of the Imperial Government to prescribe such measures as would ensure to itself the due maintenance of the Queen's authority, and to colonists of British origin that weight in the government of the country that their numbers, their

interests, and their special relationships to the sovereign power entitle them.

What applies to the Cape in this connection applies with equal force to Natal. It would be impossible to exaggerate the value of the services which the loyal inhabitants of that colony have rendered to the cause of Empire during the past twelve months; but the more conspicuous the loyalty, the greater the readiness to follow any course which the larger necessities of Imperial policy may prescribe. It is but natural that the people, and perhaps the government of that colony, should have begun to formulate some large ambitions since the tide began to turn; but they are sons of the Empire, members of one great South African family, even before they are colonists of Natal. They are not incapable of rising to the level of a grand conception. Habit has made them familiar with sacrifice upon the shrine of the larger patriotism. It was not without a natural reluctance that they surrendered some years ago the control of their own tariffs in order to enter a Customs Union that mere selfish interest alone would have kept them outside of; but once they were convinced that something more than the welfare of themselves and their immediate neighbours demanded the sacrifice, their cheerful acquiescence was from that moment assured. In like manner would they, at the call of those whom they trust, throw in their lot with their neighbours and sink their individuality for the common good.

In order to effect the ends that have been already indicated, there would be no necessity to interfere with the franchise as by law established at the Cape; but it is not less essential that one vote should have one value than it is that one man should have one vote

Let the voter in the town have the same weight allowed to his opinion as the man in the country, no more and no less, and any election for the Legislative Assembly of the now expanded colony—still further to be expanded in the manner I will presently indicate—would result in the return of a Chamber to which the maintenance of the British connection might be safely entrusted. In order, however, to make assurance doubly sure, in order to bridge over the period of reconstruction and reconciliation, the Legislative Council, instead of being a small, superfluous organism as it is at present, should consist of half as many members as the Assembly, and they, instead of being elected, should be nominated by the Crown. To this Council should be summoned representative men from all parts of the country (one in respect of each electoral district returning two members to the Assembly) no matter what their origin so long as they are prepared to take the oath of allegiance and bring to their labours the sole qualifications of recognised capacity, lofty purpose and good-will.

The obvious place of meeting for such a Parliament is Bloemfontein. Every circumstance that could enter into the calculations of a far-seeing statesman seems to conspire towards the selection of that city as the future capital of unified and united South Africa. Every practical consideration demands it. It occupies the central position; it is the railway centre of the future; it is marked down by nature as the military headquarters. Its selection for so dignified a position would win over the Boers of the Orange River Colony almost to a man. When the idea was first mooted, it was said that the traitor with whom it originated would be lynched if he dared to show his face in Cape Town. Cape Town,

however, is not so utterly bereft of reason as some of its self-constituted champions would have the world suppose. Its own importance as the New York of Southern Africa can never be impaired or taken away. Its people frankly recognised long ago that the centre of political gravity was already shifted. They are much too sensible to suppose that what has lately happened will bring it back to what is commonly spoken of, more or less affectionately, as the "shank end."

Amongst the members of the Legislative Council should be some, say a dozen at least, specially selected as the spokesmen of the native tribes and the Indian subjects of the Queen, to whom it is not possible for the franchise to be accorded. With the sole exception of rebels who have borne arms against the Queen, no man should be debarred, by reason of the part he has played in the present troubles, from membership of this superior council of advice and control. On the contrary, representative Boers as well as Afrikanders, not being avowedly irreconcilable, should be summoned to it in their due proportions. Every subject of the Queen, with the exceptions already stated, should indeed be considered eligible, so that the representative of sovereign authority might enjoy the inestimable advantage, while the work of reconstruction was in progress, of such expert assistance and sage advice as he found it of service to invoke. The names of the provisional advisers and administrators whom Lord Roberts has summoned to his aid are for the most part too plainly suggestive of a combination of those who have no interest in the country with those who, for the purposes of healthy government, have emphatically too much. It it not in that way that *Uitlanders* will be satisfied or Boers pacified.

Safety and success will be found only in the cultivation of the happy mean.

The local element in the Council might with advantage be supplemented by the presence of a statesman who had helped in the shaping of the constitutional fabric of the Canadian Dominion, an Australian who has borne his part in the controversies which have now led up to their final consummation, a high-placed Indian political and two or three English specialists in finance and constitutional law. The services of such men as these, if happily selected, would be invaluable in the task of perfecting the new machine and in getting it to work. The Council, like the Assembly, should have the power of initiating legislation, money bills excepted, and the measures required for the reorganisation of the country would naturally originate in the calmer atmosphere of that Chamber and be sent to the Assembly for their concurrence in the usual form. Ministers should be members of one or other Chamber, have audience in either and be required to possess the confidence of both. Such a scheme of government is open to the objection of novelty, no doubt; it will probably fail to commend itself to those who have omitted to make a careful study of the various idiosyncrasies of the mixed populations to which it would apply.

It would be for the provisional Legislature thus constituted—provisional in the sense that the Council might eventually become elective and cease to be nominee — to determine whether the needs of the country required the creation of provincial areas, with all the paraphernalia of separate administrations, or whether they could be satisfied by a wide enlargement of the powers of the Divisional Councils, Municipalities,

Licensing Boards, School Committees, Harbour Boards, Hospital Boards, and other local bodies now existing. That is a question upon which there might well be, and indeed would be, a great diversity of opinion. The Boer and Afrikander leaning—and this is a remarkable fact in view of the disposition of these people to be a law unto themselves—is all in the direction of a highly centralised authority. Amongst colonists of English origin, on the other hand, the passion for self-government runs to such excess that, if ten of them were to be cast on a desert island, their first instinct would be to create two Houses of Parliament of their own.

It is possible, no doubt, that what has happened might lead to a change of parts in the actual development of the constitutional drama; but, looking at the matter as it stands, without reference to the predilections that will doubtless evolve, it is impossible to deny that the country is at present over-chambered, if one may coin such a word, to a quite ridiculous extent, an extent that was only justifiable when there were no easy means of communication, when communities really were separate and felt the necessity of being wholly self-contained. If existing territorial distinctions are to be obliterated, as they must be if these unhappy troubles are ever to be relegated to the limbo of a past that none will care to remember, the country must be made one and indivisible before the new administrative areas can be prescribed; these areas must be settled with a view to actual administrative needs (not to the preservation of distinctive features that will have lost their meaning when the unification of the country becomes an accomplished fact) and the powers of the provincial authorities must not be inherent, but such

only as may be delegated to them from time to time by the central authority from whom their existence will be derived.

A real Parliament of sensible proportions, the very antithesis of the hole-and-corner conclaves in which the soul of Mr. Kruger hath so long delighted to ensconce itself, is the very prime essential of genuine equality and peace; and if Mr. Chamberlain were to make the creation of that Parliament his paramount objective, leaving to its members the settlement of many details that must be settled in accordance with the *genius loci* if they are to be settled with wisdom and good-will, he would have gone a long way towards the solution of a problem that will continue to defy solution, military expeditions and armies of occupation notwithstanding, until the missing key to it be found.

In considering the whole suggestion it may be well to bear in mind that the great colony of the Cape, as it exists to-day, is the product of successive accretions of the kind proposed. Under pressure of local discontent, at least four colonies founded upon the Crown Colony plan have already been absorbed. The moral which the retrospect seems to suggest, in the case we are considering, is the elimination of the sad probationary period to which all our colonies have been, *ex necessitate*, perhaps, in times past condemned. In the case of the Boer Republics, the probation has been already endured, whether under our flag or another is of no material consequence. The representative principle, within certain limits, has been in full force, and any return to paternal government would be a measure of pronounced reaction that could only serve to intensify the difficulties that must be encountered in any case.

An enlightened statesmanship would not say "some day," but "now"—directly the sword is sheathed and the military administration can be superseded—"we will set our new subjects, together with the old, upon the path of well-ordered progress on lines of greater liberty and truer freedom than they ever enjoyed before."

CHAPTER III

SOME OF THE SIDE ISSUES

I DO not rank as details which might wisely and properly be left to the new South African authority all the questions immediately arising out of the war, the questions that must be disposed of, in one way or another, for good or for evil, before the country can stand any chance of getting a new start with reasonable promise of a peaceful and prosperous career. It would be necessary, for example, for the Imperial Government to prescribe without delay the extent to which, if at all, it will require that the British taxpayer should be relieved of the cost of the war. That is a burden that ought to be shouldered by South Africa at large. It is true that the several communities are not in equal degrees responsible for the war; but none of them can claim to be wholly exempt from blame, and the benefits to be derived by the Cape and Natal from the consolidation of railway management and the removal of the Delagoa Bay bogey—as it will be removed when the Republics become fully British—will be so enormous that they must expect to contribute something substantial towards the acquisition of these advantages. The Imperial Government, on the other hand, might reduce the burden to a minimum by extending its guarantee to

a loan, issued at a low rate of interest, with which all the existing obligations of the various South African Governments might be consolidated and merged. The saving effected by the conversion would go some way in relief of the new obligations resulting from the war.

Then there are other items which ought to be included in this globular issue. If Dutch opinion is to be conciliated, as it ought to be in so far as it lies in our power to conciliate it, it is imperative that the rights of the British South Africa Company should be extinguished, and South Africa must be prepared to pay for such extinction. This timely disappearance would doubtless be no less agreeable to the people of Rhodesia and to the Imperial Government (who have reserved to themselves the right of expropriation) than it would be to the Boers. To them the pill of their extinction as a separate entity would be distinctly gilded if that which has always been a great rock of offence to them should descend to the depths of the buried past together with all that they themselves hold dear. Then also it would be necessary, if the root causes of friction and discontent are to be removed, that the public authority should recover the various industrial rights which the late Government of the Transvaal thought fit to alienate to foreign corporations and private individuals. The value of these monopolies, on expropriation, must in some cases be determined in accordance with the provisions of the concessions themselves. In other instances it would have to be ascertained by arbitration, but in all it would be well to lose no time in getting them equitably redeemed. South Africa at large is interested

in their extinction and would not jib at the cost of their redemption.

The disarmament of the Boers, as a condition precedent to the new departure, goes without saying. Their proud natures will rebel when they are thus placed in a position of civic inferiority; but they will be reaping only what they have sown. They had no compunction in meting out similar treatment to our people when they were masters of the country, and they must now submit to be rendered harmless in turn until, at all events, they have come to a better frame of mind. The sole alternative would be that an army of a hundred thousand men should be maintained in the country to keep them in subjection; and, since India bears the charge of its own garrison, it would be difficult to say why South Africa should not do the same. Every sensible burgher would rather be disarmed than cast upon the country so insupportable a burden. In any case it will be necessary to encourage volunteering to the very utmost amongst those to whom arms can with safety be entrusted, and an army of occupation not less than thirty thousand strong will doubtless be maintained in the country, but not wholly for local purposes, for an indefinite time to come.

To what extent the cost of this force should be a local charge is a fair question for debate. The pressing and imperative need of the Empire is a seasoned force of mounted rifles, ready to go anywhere and to do anything, men about whose ability to ride, to shoot, to scout, to live on a minimum subsistence, and to take care of themselves and their horses, there can be no sort of doubt. South Africa, the very centre

of our world-wide Empire, is the one ideal country in which such a force could be trained and exercised; later on it might be largely recruited there. None of the conditions admit of any such force being made effective in England. The Boers have proved themselves such formidable antagonists because they have been compelled, by virtue of their environment, to remain children of nature. Efficiency in war no longer consists in readiness to receive hard knocks and the valour to walk up to the cannon's mouth. These are qualities in which Englishmen have never been wanting and never will be; but we are the victims of conditions in which we never get in peace the opportunity to make fitting preparation for war. If our forefathers were better soldiers than we are, it was because they had not yet been emasculated by the luxuries, if so they can be called, of modern civilisation. The 'bus, the "bike," the train, the tram, the "tuppenny tube," were unknown means of locomotion in their day. They did not swarm in cities, but lived upon the land; they knew how to get over the ground on their own feet; they were able to distinguish the head from the tail of a horse. A year or two upon the veldt would make a Boer, for all practical purposes, even of our town-bred recruit. A few years' acquaintance with the manifold blessings of civilisation, now about to be introduced to him, will make the Boer of the future a far less formidable antagonist than we have found the Boer of the present campaign.

India is open to objections of its own, climatic and otherwise, but not less powerful than those which apply to the mother country, as the nursery of a really mobile

force, of the one neglected arm which is destined to play so large a part in the wars of the future. It is in India alone that the enormous camp-following that armies formed in that country seem to find indispensable can any longer be tolerated. It is only in wars against hordes of practically unarmed Africans and Asiatics, who never fail in coming to close quarters, that the lance, the sabre, and the bayonet can any longer be usefully employed. The days of close formations, the days when blows used not to be delivered until the opposing forces were so close together that they could look into the whites of one another's eyes, have gone never to return. Cavalry have lost their *raison d'être* when there are no longer dense masses of infantry to break up, when the fighting lines face one another at such enormous distances as to render ineffective, from sheer animal exhaustion, either the charge or the pursuit. Even artillery, the most expensive of all arms, is on its trial. When an enemy ensconces himself in a thin, extended line of entrenchments, when his fortified positions no longer offer any solid front or masonry to be blown about his ears, the best artillery in the world may fail to achieve results commensurate with expectations founded upon its cost, its range, and its power.

Picturesque war, in fact, will disappear with the present century. When there are no longer colours to defend and rally round, no bright and varied uniforms to enliven the scene, when armies will fight, literally as well as figuratively, upon their bellies, when courage of the old-fashioned, brutal sort will become a positive disqualification rather than an aid, war will become a new game, and it will have to be learned under new conditions, where individual qualities are not so warped

as must ever be the case in a crowded camp or a garrison town. There are pregnant words on record that fell from the lips of such deep-thinking, far-seeing soldiers as Chesney and Gordon. Is it too much to hope, when we come to sum up the lessons of this luminous campaign, that the inevitable deductions will be manfully applied? Is it too much to hope that we shall not fail to perceive that nature and sound policy alike have singled out South Africa as the country *par excellence* for mounted rifles and the mounted rifleman as the soldier *par excellence* for all our future wars? So far as South Africa is concerned, there can be no question that the employment of so large a proportion of infantry has been, and ever will be, a gigantic mistake. Neither Boer nor native ever did, or ever will, hold the ordinary *voetganger* in much respect, and not all his heroism in the present war does away with the fact that the less "Tommy" is employed in the future in the vast expanses of the waterless, roadless, foodless regions of the Dark Continent, the better will it be for himself and for the prestige of the nation that he serves.

But whatever the composition of the force which it may be determined to maintain, no matter by whom it may be paid, it goes without saying that it must remain under the undivided control of the Imperial authority, and in that force all such units as the Cape Mounted Rifles, the Natal Police, the Protectorate and Rhodesian forces, as well as the Transvaal Police now in course of formation, should be merged. It should be in possession of all the fortified places, the artillery, the organised transport and the magazines.

Not less essential is it to the peace of the country

that the Imperial Government, in arranging their new concordat with the Colonial authority, should stipulate for the repeal of the commando law and the abolition of the office of field-cornet. These officials, whose functions are in part military and in part judicial, exercise an influence which is distinctly pernicious in its character and wholly prejudical to the evolution of settled peace. War and civil disturbance are their principal *raison d'être*. Whether in the Colonies or in the Republics, they have ever been notorious centres of reaction and disaffection. Their perceptions of their duty as petty justices have long been a scandal; they have systematically done their best to thwart and belittle the authority of the paid magistracy, which is, *per contra*, one of the most efficient and unblemished in the world. You can no more break up the military organisation of the Boers, without the abolition of the field-cornet, than you can bring a native tribe under control while leaving untouched the authority of its chief.

There is, furthermore, one right which the Imperial Government cannot fail to reserve without a dereliction of duty that the nation, in view of its past and present sacrifices, would not readily forgive. That is the right of planting British colonists on British lands. Thus briefly may the reservation be stated; but the actual exercise of the right is a matter in which the kernel of the whole difficulty we have yet to contend with lies effectually concealed, a matter that may well engage all the talent and all the energy that the directors of Imperial policy may be able to command. Mr. Selous has foreshadowed a time when the gold mines and the diamond mines shall have been exhausted, the casual element in the population shall have gone whence it

came, and the Boer shall be reinstated in his own. That fear has, indeed, been for many years past the bugbear of the situation. It has become the fashion here in England to say that the Boers have been obdurate and unaccommodating because they relied in the last resort upon divisions of opinion in England preventing harsh measure being dealt out to them. That may or may not have been the case, as a determining factor in their conduct, with Afrikanders such as Mr. Melius De Villiers, Chief Justice of the Free State, and Dr. Te Water, ex-Minister without portfolio in the Cape, whose private correspondence has lately been published as a state-paper, with the manifest object of stifling dissent from Mr. Chamberlain's policy and making the expression of such dissent appear unpatriotic. Afrikanders such as those I have named possess a certain superficial acquaintance with the course of politics over here; and it may be that they have endeavoured to impress their views upon their countrymen; but they are manifestly ignorant of the fact that the Liberal Opposition in Parliament has counted for less than nothing since the last General Election, and they are seemingly incapable of appreciating the circumstance that nothing is so popular as a war, with the masses in any country, until it has to be paid for or it becomes unsuccessful.

All this, however, is of no real consequence. The rank and file of the Boers neither know nor care any more about the state of parties in England than they concern themselves about the politics of Timbuctoo. What has always lain at the bottom of their refusal to surrender any portion of their predominance in the Transvaal has been their disbelief in the permanent character of the alien immigration. "We know you,"

was their favourite argument, "and we know our country. You will stay here just so long as there are mines to work and no longer. Well, we have seen gold-fields come and we have seen them go. We have seen men of all nations rushing in their thousands to places where you might now look for a few hundreds of these *Uitlanders* in vain. Where you are now working you may, perhaps, find it worth while staying longer than you stayed upon those other fields; but sooner or later you will come to the end of the gold, and then you will go. You have come to stay as long as it suits you, and no longer, and we are not going to give you the power to saddle our farms with debts for all sorts of works and wickedness which you propose to enjoy the advantage of and leave us to pay for when you are gone."

To this attitude the Government and the Volksraad adhered so consistently that the funded debts of the Transvaal are but a bagatelle. "Pay as you go" was their motto. Imagine for a moment what the debt of such a country would have been if the most extensive gold-fields that the world has ever known had chanced to be located in some South American republic, or even in Australia, and let us have the candour to admit that, no matter how wrong-headed he may have shown himself in some respects, the Boer with all his faults had some saving virtues after all.

The world being, however, as it is, this admission cannot be pushed to its logical conclusion. His virtues notwithstanding, the Boer must be persuaded, by arguments that even he will find irresistible, that his most cherished convictions will have to go by the board. If we have failed hitherto in convincing him that he cannot have his little world all to himself, that he must learn

to tolerate the sight of a neighbour's chimney from the *stoep* of his own homestead, it is because we have not had our attention sufficiently concentrated upon South Africa. The Boer has had all his faculties riveted upon one scene and upon one object; ours have been distracted by preoccupations innumerable in every quarter of the globe. The Boer has appreciated the situation to the extent that he has always understood that he had to shout very loud indeed whenever he desired to make England hear. This time he has filled the whole earth with such a volume of sound and fury that it is not possible to suppose that we shall once again forget. England proposes not alone to conquer South Africa, or to reconquer it if that expression be more correct, but to set upon the country such a sign and seal of her conquest that all whom it concerns will have no room left for dangerous misconceptions in the time to come. That, at any rate, is the national frame of mind at the moment. True, we have upon us one of our hot fits; but this time, we are called upon to believe, it will not be succeeded by a cold. "Never again" is the watchword under which we are pursuing the conflict to the bitter end, and there is no question more interesting or more vital at the moment than the means by which this heroic determination is to be translated into the consistency of solemn and abiding fact.

Having in due course subdued our Boer, it becomes obviously necessary to swamp him, if need should be, in order to render our calling and election sure. And that is where the rub comes in. A policy of colonisation, upon a comprehensive scale, necessitates and presupposes the existence of certain crude ingredients wherewith the powers that be can work. There must

be suitable lands to settle, eligible immigrants to plant upon them, and the supplementary aids to ensure to the experiment—since all such enterprises are essentially experimental in their nature — a reasonable chance of success. It behoves us to inquire whether, and to what extent, the conditions precedent are to be met with in the present case. That inquiry may well form the staple of what remains to be said.

CHAPTER IV

SHALL WE GO FORTH?

We have had two important essays in colonisation in South Africa up to the present time, and two only, and it is interesting and important to consider what the results were in these cases. In the early twenties of the present century, the cessation of our Continental wars had resulted in a wide-spread distress, for which the emigration of the superabundant elements in the population was believed to be a remedy. At the same time the necessity was felt of strengthening the British position on the eastern frontiers of the Cape Colony by a living bulwark that should intervene between the Boers, who were steadily advancing from the west, and the Kaffirs, who were continually approaching from the opposite direction. The Government of the day accordingly resolved to send out 5000 British settlers. There were not many daily newspapers or local journals in those days to work up such a movement. The voyage to the Cape was a serious undertaking, often requiring nearly ninety days. The inducements that were offered were meagre in the extreme. A Boer, going out to possess himself of a new location, from which the native inhabitants had been driven forth, did not content himself with an individual holding of less than 6000 acres. The Government of George IV. thought 100 acres was an adequate estate for the emigrating Englishman. And yet, in response to this unattractive

call, the population of these islands being little more than half of what it is at the present day, applications were received from an aggregate of not less than 100,000 souls. If these applications had been one and all acceded to (as would also have been the case if the several Governments and the mine-owners had in more recent times displayed the good sense to employ none but white labour on the railways and in the mines, confining the native labour to agricultural pursuits) the course of South African history would have been very different from what it has been in the intervening years.

The Government, however, adhered to their original limitations. The selected settlers proceeded to their destination, and in the District of Albany, with Grahamstown as its capital, they formed a colony, from the loins of which the prosperous and loyal wards and townships of the eastern districts, stretching from the Orange River to the sea, have slowly but surely sprung. The Settlers and their offspring have, indeed, been as the salt of the earth in the whole of South Africa, and nothing but encouragement is to be found so far as the results of that experiment are concerned. By the time the Crimean war was ended, the boundary of British dominion had been pushed farther eastward to the Kei. In accordance with the usage of those days, Her Majesty's Government had in the British service a German Legion, which it was not thought advisable wholly to disband when the war was over. The legionaries were accordingly sent to settle in British Kaffraria, likewise upon plots of modest dimensions, and the smiling neighbourhood of King William's Town testifies to this day that no error of judgment was committed in regard to that experiment either. The German settlers and their descendants are not only pros-

perous but loyal, and if recent events should have furnished here and there an exception to this general statement, the exception does but serve to prove the rule. There are no better settlers in the world than Germans—under anything but German sway.

I will not take it upon me to hazard an opinion whether, in the event of new efforts being made in the same direction, equally satisfactory results would ensue. Many things have happened in the past fifty years, many changes have taken place in the texture of our population generally, and not least in that of the rural population, which must at any rate suggest a doubt. Have we ceased to be a colonising nation? Have the home conditions, as in France, become so tolerable to the masses that the impulse to go forth into new lands, where the only avenues to fortune are privation and sacrifice, has ceased to operate? Have the modern conditions made us all parts of one huge machine so absolutely that the qualities of initiative and adventure are not the dominant note of the Englishman of the present day, as they were of his fathers?

On the face of things, the situation in the rural districts clearly does not seem to offer the distinct encouragement to a large measure of colonisation that the future well-being of South Africa, as an integral portion of the British Empire, seems imperatively to require. Instead of there being a pressure of population upon the land, as was felt to be the case until we learned to rely to so large an extent upon commodities of foreign origin, I gather that there is a difficulty, said to be almost insuperable, in finding hands for the performance of the most necessary work.

The potential immigrant expects more and is qualified to render less in the way of useful service to a new country than the case was with those who "struck out" in a former generation. According to the popular estimate of the situation, South Africa, as a home for *bona fide* settlers on the land, has been tried and found wanting. There are other countries that can claim, with better show of reason, to be overflowing with milk and honey, countries to which the settler may go with an assurance of settled peace, a cordial welcome and a fair chance of comfort, if not of affluence, as his reward. I perceive no disposition on the part of our yeomen and their labourers to set their faces in the direction of the Queen's new acquisitions: it is distressing to learn that so large a proportion of the young men who went out a few months ago, with every intention of turning their swords into plough-shares when the war was ended, have quickly (perhaps too quickly) come to the conclusion that the country presents no sufficient inducements for them to adhere to that determination. It may be the fault of the country, or rather its misfortune; it may be that the young folk of the present generation are cast in a different mould from that of their forebears. It is not easy, I admit, for people with few resources in themselves, people who have grown up dependent on a particular environment for their happiness, to find many compensations in life on an African farm; but the settlers have to be found, and they must be settlers upon whose loyalty the most implicit reliance can be placed, or it is as certain that the last state of South Africa will be worse than the first as it is that human nature will continue to assert itself in the future as it has done in the past.

There are, of course, some favoured spots for which settlers could be secured without special inducement. These, however, are not in the market. If there was one lesson more than another that the Boer elders succeeded in impressing upon their children and their grandchildren in recent years, it was the folly and the danger, the impolicy and the treason, of surrendering to any *Uitlander* the farms that were good enough for them to occupy themselves. Land that was not suited to the occupation of a Boer, not suited even to the occupation of a Kaffir, they were at liberty to dispose of for the largest sum they could find any *rooinek* foolish enough to give; but with here and there an exception, while disposing of the mineral rights they have managed to retain the homesteads and the freeholds on the Highveld which every instinct of their nature, fortified by the counsel of their natural guides, philosophers, and friends, has taught them to cling to with a tenacity of purpose in which self-interest and patriotic devotion were combined.

It may be, of course, that Boer estimates of value will prove to have been founded upon a crude conception of capabilities that British administration will speedily dispel; we cannot forget that the whole of Witwatersrand might have been purchased less than twenty years ago for as many thousand pounds; it may be that the northern portions of the Transvaal will never have their fair chance until they have been opened up by roads and railways, subjected to irrigation and devoted to the forms of agriculture for which their soil and climate make them specially adapted. There are, no doubt, untold mines of wealth that the Boer has never dreamt of in his philosophy; but these have yet to be dis-

covered, and meanwhile it is well to remember that local opinion has long since decided that the Boer's estimate of land, *qua* land, founded upon his own experience, may usually be accepted as a pretty shrewd one. Nothing is easier than to rail at the Boer for his laziness and unprogressiveness; but it is a noteworthy fact, which admits of no serious denial, that the very latest arrival from Europe, planted amongst Boer surroundings, tends to approximate towards the habits of his neighbours with a rapidity at which he himself is alarmed. He gravitates insensibly towards a certain low level of exertion. The explanation is not to be sought in conscious moral degeneracy, but in the character of the physical surroundings. The Boer returned to Europe—say to our universities, for example—is conspicuous, if for anything, for his general briskness and capacity for work.

It remains to be seen to what extent the change in sovereign authority will loosen the hold of the burghers upon these more desirable lands. My information upon that matter, so far as it goes, coincides with what, in view of what has been already stated, it would be but reasonable to expect. The Boer will cling to his heritage in the first place because he loves it, in the second place because all avenues against another *trek* are barred, and last, but not least, because he is not yet persuaded that his defeat is final and that he is doomed never to be master of his own house again. Will he bend under the new conditions or will he stand up against them, in an attitude of sullen and implacable hostility, until he break? Time alone can tell. His isolation will, no doubt, for some time to come, be as complete as discontent with his lot can make it; but there will be at least one visible

embodiment of the new order whose unwelcome visitations he will find himself unable to evade. Up to the present time the contributions of the land to the revenue of the Transvaal have not exceeded an average of £20,000 per annum even in recent years. The Boer has got himself acquit of his obligations to the State by a payment of ten shillings per annum for his six-thousand-acre farm. Local taxation he has never known in any shape or form. We shall change all that. Whether the scheme of Government adopted be the inappropriate form on which Downing Street is understood to have set its heart, or some other form that shall be at any rate not expressly designed to perpetuate the feud and delay the reconciliation, there will doubtless be a periodical valuation of all lands, a regular assessment upon that valuation for local purposes, as there is already at the Cape, and some form of direct taxation upon a higher scale than the present to satisfy the requirements of the State.

Will life become such a burden to him under the load of these exactions that the Boer will divest himself of his property and sink into the condition of a poor white, or will he rise to the occasion and adapt himself to the new conditions while retaining the prejudices and the political ideals of his race? Than this there is no question which it is more interesting or important for the politician or the sociologist to consider in connection with South Africa at the present time. There are some, I know, who count upon the rapid and complete degeneration of the Boer. They see him emerge from this struggle for existence utterly broken and demoralised, the mere wreck or shadow of a man. They see him not only more sulky, but more indolent, as one of the many

consequences of his unsuccessful enterprise; they see him mortgaging his farm to the Jewish storekeeper of Continental origin, who will take the place of the boycotted English storekeeper, in order to pay his taxes and keep himself alive; they see the mortgagee presently in possession of the lands, and the once substantial burgher driven forth a vagabond and a wanderer on the face of the earth. Forecasts of this character seem to me, however, to be dictated largely by a wish that is father to the thought. There are no antecedent grounds in the history of the Boer, there is nothing whatever in the character of his present defeat, to justify the belief that he will take his beating in this manner, lying down. On the contrary, there is every reason to anticipate that he will find solace in the thought that though defeated he is not disgraced; he will yield, it is true, but only to overwhelming odds; he will be able to carry his head as high as ever he did; and, if he does not nurse his wrath to keep it warm, it will be simply because his conqueror proceeds from the conquest of arms to conquest of another sort.

Be this, however, as it may: I will assume, for the purposes of this argument that the Boer remains a fixed quantity as we find him. His holdings must, then, be eliminated from the calculation of suitable grounds available for settlement. What remains? The yet ungranted lands still belonging to the State, in the Transvaal as in the Orange River Colony, are limited in extent and mainly undesirable for the purposes in view. The native locations are already occupied to the full extent of their capacity. There are, however, lands of vast extent belonging to private individuals and to real estate corporations, the greater portion of which have their

legal domicile in this country. It may be admitted that these proprietors have not hitherto turned their properties to the best account. They were originally acquired, for the most part, with a view to mineral potentialities; they have been patiently nursed with an eye upon the unearned increment; the policy of the Boer Governments has afforded, not a stimulus, but a stern discouragement to actual settlement.

This state of things will entirely disappear. Public policy will combine with private interest to turn these huge estates to good and useful account. It is not too early to insist upon this identity of interest and obligation. The proprietors, as I have good reason for knowing, are waiting upon the Government for the necessary lead. They can do but little without such aid as the Government alone can furnish. This aid can best be furnished by assistance in the choice of the settler, by bringing him to the land, by supplying him on easy terms with such requisites as horses, oxen, mules, harness, tents, tools and other appliances, which the Imperial authorities now possess in superabundance, and which must either be disposed of for this purpose at the end of the war or cast away for an old song, probably (as in some previous wars) for the sole benefit of those who have lately been our enemies in the field. The landowners have already made it known, in a general way, what terms they will offer to *bona fide* settlers. They will exact no rent until the tenant has had time to establish himself, say for two or three years. They will give him the option of acquiring the freehold of his farm, mineral rights reserved, during the whole term of his tenancy, and at a price to be agreed upon when he enters upon his lease. They will undertake to compensate him, when the tenancy is determined, for

improvements made with their knowledge and consent, if the option to purchase should not be exercised. They will encourage him to prospect by giving him an interest in any minerals he may discover upon his holding.

More attractive terms than these it is not easy to imagine. If they do not suffice, or if it should prove that settlers are not lacking, but the right land is not available for them in the right quarters, the Government will have no alternative but to follow the New Zealand example and expropriate lands for settlement, or that of Victoria, where free selection can be made, for agricultural purposes, of a stated proportion of every uncultivated area.

It may be freely admitted that the time has not yet arrived when it would be reasonable to expect that shiploads of emigrants should be setting forth from these shores to make good the conquest which is not even yet fully effected; but the time has surely come when it should be made manifest that the business of colonisation will be attempted in a business-like way. Departmental Committees and Political Commissions, possessed of no special knowledge of their subject, convey to the observer no adequate assurance of the fact that the powers that be have risen to the level of a great occasion. If Emigration Committees had been formed in every English county, and if the expert representatives of these Committees had been sent out in the wake of the army to spy out the land, the preliminaries to a genuine movement might have been well advanced by the time the military operations had come to an end. As it is, there is too much reason to fear that the hot fit will have spent itself before anything effectual has been accomplished; we shall return to the beaten paths in which perfunctory and unintelligent officialism pursues its unchallenged course; and the future

will be left to chance, while chance is not usually upon our side. If it be true, as we are sometimes asked to believe, that the Empire was built up in an absent-minded manner, it is conceivable, to say the least, that the seeds of its destruction may be sown in a similar way. If there is one truth worth insisting upon more than another, it is that the termination of hostilities is not the end of the trouble in which we find ourselves involved; it is, indeed, nothing more than the end of the beginning.

CHAPTER V

THE OUTLOOK

But what, it may well be asked, what promise is there of future peace, of mutual respect and forbearance, in the alternative policy put forward in rough outline in the course of these pages? In the light of past experience, and human nature being what it is, it would be a bold man, beyond a doubt, who should prophesy smooth things with any degree of confidence. We must look the situation in the face and refuse to deceive ourselves with vain imaginings. It is very handsome, of course, to say that we shall owe the Boer no grudge and give him perfectly fair-play when the war is over. But what about the Boer? Will he reciprocate the sportsmanlike sentiments that we ourselves propose to display? Is there not too much reason to apprehend that, while he will be in no manner of doubt as to his defeat, he will retire from the contest with the feeling that he has not been beaten in such manner, or in such time, or at such cost, that he must cease to have a good opinion of himself? Is he not fully entitled to that good opinion? Has a people that has withstood the might of the British Empire for twelve months done nothing to vindicate its right to separate existence? Must he abandon for ever the hope that the day will yet come when his claims to freedom and unbounded independence can no longer be denied? These are questions that cannot fail to suggest themselves to

every thoughtful Boer and every thoughtful Englishman alike. Time alone can supply the answer. Nothing is certain, except that the Boer cannot possibly remain the arrogant, intractable type that there was some excuse for his being while he laboured under the delusion that the whole earth and the fulness thereof was his exclusive heritage by every right both human and divine; but what this shattering of his convictions will result in depends upon elements the nature and force of which we cannot gauge, and on circumstances that neither he nor we can wholly control, or, at the present time, more than partially and dimly foresee.

Our part, however, is clear. An inscrutable wisdom, while conferring upon us the rights of the conqueror, has imposed upon us the duty of regarding those rights as being of the nature of a trust. If it was left for Mr. Kruger to convey to us the forcible and timely reminder that a nation's strength consists in men and not in money, it seems to be reserved to us to teach the Boer in turn that no enduring power can be raised upon racial antagonism and the ever-narrowing foundations upon which he proposed to build. That is a lesson which can scarcely fail to have gone home to Englishmen and Dutchmen alike. Its practical outcome ought to be seen in the quick consolidation of the country, and in the definite organisation of that Centre Party to which the great mass of the people, no matter what their national origin, undoubtedly belongs. The average South African is not a man of violent methods or extreme views. Extremists have bullied him and cajoled him into one or other of their opposing camps, and he has allowed himself to be led or driven, instead of standing resolutely in the middle way and allowing the hot-heads

on either side to dash themselves against his solid bulk in vain.

I emphasise the conviction that the true mission of the Imperial authority is not to govern South Africa, or any part of it, from Downing Street; not to strive to make of it a new India or even a second Egypt; but to correct the abuses which have sprung up in the past, give the people a new start under new conditions, and then, at the earliest possible moment —and not when the Crown Colony experiment shall have been abandoned in despair and disgust—leave the task of reconstruction to themselves. Federation (or, to be more accurate, the promotion of some form of political unity) has always been the ideal of every serious politician in the country from Sir George Grey's time onwards, an ideal that was never lost sight of even when the waving of hostile flags and the beating of hostile drums seemed to be thrusting us further and further apart. The shrewdest, however, have consistently held that no federal arrangement could be successfully approached save through the avenues of Unification, and some few had prescience enough to perceive that even then the Commonwealth could not be welded together without a liberal shedding of patriotic blood upon the iron with which it must be forged. It rests largely with those upon whom the initiative has now devolved to say whether the ideal shall be advanced to its final consummation at one bound, or the fruits of a sacrifice ruinous to the other side, and gigantic even for ourselves, shall be allowed to wither away unvalued and unplucked. What has happened necessitates an appeal, and a prompt appeal, to the imagination with which Dutch as well as English are endowed. There is no ray of hope shed over the blackened prospect by the

light which has come from the councils of Her Majesty's Government as yet. There is nothing either to reconcile the Boer or to kindle in the breast of the English colonist the ennobling conviction that the nation is about to entrust a great work to him, that he is called upon to lead the way, and to show himself worthy to lead the way, in a common effort for the common good. The situation of Dutch and English alike calls aloud for bread. Mr. Chamberlain proposes to give them a stone.

It is not to be expected that men in whom the passion for independence for themselves and dominion over others has attained to such a pitch as it has in the case of the Boers will rally to any new order in which their susceptibilities and their characteristics are in no way studied. They are a governing race, and by their deeds they have proved it. They are, in fact, what their history and their position as lords of the soil have made them. It may well be that they would bear no grudge against their conquerors if they should be admitted to full and immediate participation in the benefits of the partnership in which they are to be absorbed against their will. It is inevitable that they should sulk, and plot, and thwart us all they can, if they should be condemned for an indefinite term to the humiliating, uninspiring rôle for which they are understood to be reserved. Such a position, once created, tends to perpetuate its own existence; the way of escape is not made easy, nor is it plain. Whatever truth there may be in the popular conviction that there is nothing like a "fight to a finish" as a basis for enduring friendship between the erstwhile combatants, it presupposes the idea that the victor will make a prompt and cordial advance to his vanquished foe. There is no justification in what we know of the Boer for the strange

supposition that he will even try to content himself with his new lot if we fasten upon him the brand of the suspect. It argues an utter ignorance of his history and character to suppose that he will cringe and fawn as a dog to the hand that has chastised him.

We are told, however, that "magnanimity" is amongst the things to be included in the fateful *index* of "Never again," for the Boer is incapable of understanding it. Such magnanimity as was exhibited in 1881 he probably was incapable of understanding. We did not understand it as such ourselves, and he and we alike are now paying the penalties of the mutual misconception. The magnanimity that extends generous treatment after conquest is, however, a quality that may be understood of all men. Even a Boer will be able to distinguish it from a pusillanimous attempt to get out of a difficulty and disguise a defeat. The more magnanimity we exhibit, so long as the symbol of British sovereignty flies unchallenged at Bloemfontein and Pretoria, the earlier the day when Dutch and English will be able to mingle their tears and their smiles over the irrecoverable past in one common sorrow and one common hope. If it be too early as yet to speak of an amnesty for rebels at the Cape, as it well may be, it is not too soon to make it appear that there will be not one trace of the vindictive in our attitude, nothing wanting to show that we appreciate the heroic character of the struggle, so far as the Boers are concerned, when the curtain has been rung down upon the final scene. The Parliament of the future (if the great central authority that I have in mind should come into being) will have a great task and a great opportunity. Its labours would be immensely facilitated by a tacit recognition of the civil character of the conflict, such

a recognition as would come of a compassionate allowance being granted from the public funds, not only to volunteers disabled in the service of the Queen, but to burghers also who may have been incapacitated by honourable wounds. From this consideration should, of course, be excepted the foreign mercenary, the colonial rebel, the burgher of English origin who took out his papers since the war began, and such men as had not honourably respected any oaths and obligations to which they had subscribed. There is not by any means wanting a vein of tenderness in the composition of the Boer, and that sentiment would assuredly be touched by a formal recognition on the part of his conqueror that his rights as a citizen were not extinguished on the day that his flag went down.

In any survey of the field that is now spread out before us in all its broad perspective, there is yet one other factor that it would be more than fatuous to ignore, and that is the marked religious predilections of our foes. The honest fanaticism that led them to count upon the Divine blessing as they entered upon their daring enterprise will no longer hold them in its thralls when they realise how completely they are overthrown. They appealed to the God of battles, and He has left them prostrate in the dust. The conclusion is irresistible. They are the last people in the world to seek refuge in the impious alternative, and it will be something gained when the conclusion is borne in upon their slow intelligence that they were not with those who have their quarrel just. It is fortunate, perhaps, both for them and for us that they possess in a high degree the faculty of submitting themselves to "God's will" with a grace they could never affect if they believed their reverses to be due to man's ordinance alone.

ON THE EVE OF WAR

[March 1899]

GETTING TO GRIPS

. . . I AM returning to England next week, after a stay of less than three months in South Africa, instead of the three years that I originally contemplated. It is not easy to forecast the actual course of events; but I cannot get away from the conviction that this will be a very fine country for a family man to be out of for a long time to come. I have put my own affairs in the best order possible, and advised my friends not only to curtail their responsibilities, but to withdraw what capital they can while there is yet time. There is an ugly feeling abroad, and although the great bulk of the people have not the remotest desire for war, they appear to be so dead to the significance of what is going on around them that they will not take the steps by which alone war can ultimately be prevented.

I had not been many hours in Cape Town before I realised how great a change had come over the situation in the course of the past eighteen months. Men who used to be distinguished for their sweet reasonableness had become perfectly rabid, and I had more than one unpleasant incident forced upon me by old friends who would have my views, whether I wanted to discuss politics with them or not, and grew excessively angry when they got them. So far as I could judge, the heat displayed was in inverse proportion to the knowledge. The men of yesterday, and the men with whom politics are a matter of passion rather than a subject of

study, were all for carrying things with a very high hand indeed. Those who could carry their recollections back for a quarter of a century were better able to appreciate the difficulties and dangers of the situation; but they, again, are for the most part possessed with the strange idea that Milner and Chamberlain are so superlatively clever that no need exists for bestirring themselves. Hofmeyr, Schreiner, Sauer (with each of whom I had lengthy discussions) realise to the full that we are on the eve of great events. Ministers believe thoroughly in minding their own business; but they would bring influence to bear upon Kruger, and would probably take formal steps with a view of bringing him to a better frame of mind, if any encouragement in that direction reached them from Government House. Government House, however, has become very much what it was in Frere's time, though what was possible twenty years ago is no longer possible to-day. Milner will not attempt to dragoon his Ministers as Frere did; but he will go his own way, with their concurrence or without it, and they will probably go theirs, with results that cannot fail to be disastrous for all concerned. The attitude of Schreiner and his colleagues was one of sorrow rather than anger. They made no attempt to defend Kruger's policy or administration; but their contention was that the methods employed for coercing him were not entitled to support and could never succeed. It is eloquent of the prejudice that rules so large a section of the English press, and that the most patriotic and most powerful, that I could not get the *Times* to publish a letter pleading for fair-play for these men and for a generous recognition of the difficulties with which they find themselves beset. I was especially struck by the

straightforwardness and moderation of Sauer, who is evidently the real leader of the Ministry. Strong he is in his maintenance of constitutional rights, more distinct than ever in his recognition of a certain kind and degree of Afrikander solidarity; but to call in question the loyalty of these men, in the sense of supposing them to be capable of contriving aught against the Queen's supremacy, would be cruel if it were not so palpably absurd. They are, however, only human after all, and it will not be surprising, if they are thrust aside and spat upon in the way that seems so popular in Cape Town just now, if they have neither the heart nor the capacity for rendering any useful service to the Empire when the time of trial comes.

It is impossible to exaggerate the madness of some of the ruling influences either at Johannesburg or at Pretoria. It is galling, of course, to find the Boer case against England, the Boer case against the *Uitlanders*, and the Boer case, above all, against the hated "capitalists," put in good round English by British subjects in the most offensive terms; but the seditious excesses of the *Uitlander* papers are likewise beyond all bounds. They really don't know what they want, some of these scribes—certainly they do not understand what is good for those whom they claim to represent—and their anticipations are as unintelligent as those of a baby as to what would happen if their continual attempts to undermine the institutions of the country should precipitate a war. Now that a change has been effected in the editorship of the *Star*, we may look with confidence to a distinct improvement so far as form is concerned; but what after all is style in comparison with substance when

you are dealing with rude, unlettered people like the Boers? All your classic modes and pretty euphemisms are thrown away upon such illiterates; but they will get at your meaning and they will hold you to that. Looked at in this light, it seems at least doubtful whether any material improvement is to be expected. I discussed the situation at great length the other day with Mr. Monypenny, the new editor. Naturally I was not free from some curiosity to discover the marks of superior wisdom that made the gentleman worth, while still in his apprenticeship, twice as much to my old Company as I was content to assign to my own humble services, while not only editing the *Star* but supervising the whole of an extensive business, which included half-a-dozen other newspapers in its details. Mr. Monypenny, who comes direct from Printing-House Square, and proposes to go back there (as Editor, I believe) when he has fulfilled the mission he has condescended to make to this country, was good enough to say that he had come to take up my work at the point at which I had laid it down. Seeing how much had happened since the early days of 1895, I could scarcely be expected to subscribe to this view of things; but I ventured to express the hope that he would recognise as clearly at I had always endeavoured to do the difference between what was and what might have been. I advised him to be in no hurry to accept the views of those by whom he was surrounded as to any royal road out of all our afflictions, but to go to Pretoria and listen with an open mind as to what had to be said on the other side before coming to any set conclusions about the disorders of the State.

It was plain, however, that an open mind was just what the new editor of the *Star* did not possess, although he came out, of course, with perfect liberty of action. His gratuitous assurances upon that head were not only emphatic but somewhat amusing. It was a baseless calumny to suggest, as the Government organ had done, that he had come out for a purpose, and that an evil one. Barely twenty-four hours in the country, he was satisfied not only of the intolerable nature of the *Uitlander* grievances, but likewise of the sovereign remedy by which alone those grievances could be removed. "Franchise" was the word, "immediate enfranchisement." "And what if they will not grant it?" "Then they must be made to."

So we had a long palaver on the subject of this mode of obtaining settled peace for the poor unsettled country—its wisdom, its honesty, its practical utility. Mr. Monypenny took pronounced exception to a remark of mine that any demand for the franchise on the part of the Imperial Government would be ethically indefensible. England, I maintained, had no honest desire to be rid of her *Uitlander* subjects, or to strengthen the South African Republic by adding these *Uitlanders* to the burghers, as against herself and her colonies. While it was open to *Uitlanders* themselves to demand the franchise, if they were prepared to accept it with all its consequences, but not otherwise, it was not open to any English Government to demand it in their behalf as a means either of overthrowing the Republic or of rendering its absorption in the Empire merely a matter of time. Such a demand could not fail to arouse the dormant suspicions of even the well-disposed amongst the Boers

and rally them to Mr. Kruger's side. In face of the repeated declarations of Her Majesty's Government that the franchise was a matter of internal concern, it seemed incredible that any Minister could authorise any such demand. Moreover, it was certain that so small a proportion of the *Uitlanders* would forswear their natural allegiance in order to become burghers that the policy had not even the merit—granting even that its adoption did not provoke a collision—of ensuring its ostensible aim.

"Then England is to do nothing," roared the young lion, "despite the danger to her prestige by allowing Krugerism to develop? It has taken hold of the Free State and is rapidly taking hold of the Colony. England must either come to grips with Mr. Kruger now, or confess her inability to tackle him, with the inevitable result that Krugerism becomes the ruling force, and England's hold upon any portion of South Africa is not worth five years' purchase. She must either take up the cause of her subjects now or they will make their own terms with Pretoria, and the rest will follow as certain as night follows the day."

"Softly and gently, sir," I said. "Permit me to point out that it is not in question whether England should stand by her subjects and defend her own interests against aggression. The point at issue is whether a demand for the franchise is the best and only means of attaining her legitimate ends. It is largely a question now of endeavouring to make up for lost time, always a difficult and often a hopeless undertaking. If your incomparable Colonial Secretary had proved himself, as a practical statesman, equal to the situation created by the Raid, he would not have made a bad position worse

by endless and irritating correspondence, but he would have seen to it that for every fort Mr. Kruger raised we raised two, and for every gun he landed in the country we landed one also, with men to handle them. As it is, Mr. Kruger, in the military sense, is master of the situation, and it is madness for us to proceed, either in our press or in our diplomacy, as though he were not. If Her Majesty's Government are bent upon gaining the franchise for the *Uitlanders*, the best method of approach would be through the good offices of the other South African Governments; but better than the franchise would be the confidence and friendship of the Boer, from which everything in the way of necessary reform would follow."

"Sooner said than done."

"Not at all. You have only to remove the root cause of their irritation by putting them on the same footing as the Free State (which I believe on my soul and conscience to be the limits of Mr. Kruger's ambition) stipulating only for disarmament as a *quid pro quo*. He is using the *Uitlanders* merely as a pawn in the game."

"And you would have England do the same! But give up Article 4; England will never do that!"

"But why not? Surely the aim of England's policy, now that she turns her serious attention to South Africa, should be to neutralise as far as possible the consequences of her past neglect. What really is the practical value of Article 4? What is the good of retaining the power of veto over treaties when you do not control the conduct of diplomatic intercourse? The thing's a farce, or would be if it did not seem so likely to culminate in a disgraceful tragedy. If the Transvaal were to abuse her independence (which the Free State has never done, which the Transvaal would be less likely

to do if she had it in reality than now when she has but the pretence of it) there would be no difficulty in creating a *casus belli* if we wanted one. If we go to war with her at any time, other Powers will not be restrained from helping her, if it suits their books to join in a crusade for the purpose of humbling England, by the fact that there are no treaties of alliance which England has recognised: they will be restrained, if at all, by the predominance of the British fleet. If England were to adopt this line, she would be demonstrating her own strength and honesty of purpose, while putting to the test the assurances of Mr. Kruger that he has armed only to resist a threatened attack. Mr. Kruger will soon find himself minus the bulk of his supporters if his policy should stand forth revealed to all South Africa as one of intimidation, so far as the *Uitlanders* are concerned, and undisguised aggression upon his neighbours. There are no limits, however, to the support he will get if he is able to maintain the fiction that Her Majesty's Government and the *Uitlanders* are the aggressors, while his policy is one of pure and patriotic defence. South Africa at large does not want England to be ousted from her position of paramountcy. She knows it to be impossible, even if it were desirable, and undesirable even if it were possible; but she does want the international *status quo* to be preserved, with the Transvaal well assured of her independence and the *Uitlanders* so governed that they will be contented with their lot."

"They never will be so governed," was Mr. Monypenny's emphatic opinion, "unless they have the franchise, and no amount of argument will convince me that sound policy and justice alike do not warrant an

agitation for that, with all the force of the Empire at our backs."

And so the discussion ended. I can plainly perceive that there are lots of irresponsibles around who are quite capable, single-handed, of setting fire to the whole house that it has taken thousands of us all these years to build up. None of these people can grasp the extent to which the situation has been profoundly modified by the neglect of England during these past four years to take a serious view of her South African responsibilities. There has been talking enough and writing enough to solve all the difficulties of the universe, but in the way of practical diplomacy and genuine military preparation Pretoria has enjoyed an absolute monopoly. Over there, indeed, they are as much steeped in their new armaments and their new international relations as the agitators here are in their grievances. Neither seems capable of appreciating the standpoint of the other. Some curious stories are afloat as to Mr. Kruger's readiness to resist any unacceptable demands that may be made upon him. One runs that after the Raid he demanded to know how much ammunition the Germans required in their war with France. Being informed, he insisted upon orders being sent to Europe for just double the amount. That was in the Henry-Martini days. Then the Mauser and the big guns came along, just at the time when England was beginning to get her hands free from troubles elsewhere. He called upon Joubert to get ready a new indent for ammunition, to which the Commandant-General demurred, on the grounds partly that the magazines were well supplied, but mainly for the reason that when there was an over-abundance of ammunition handy, the

Boers could with difficulty be restrained from using it. Kruger, however, carried his point, and not only so, but when the Council broke up he called the clerk to him and made him add a cipher to all the quantities, thus multiplying the sanctioned amount by ten! This was afterwards explained as a clerical error, and in due time the peccant clerk doubtless received his reward.

The sight of Pretoria girdled with forts and Oom Paul going about in state escorted by a troop of white-plumed and superbly mounted warriors brings home the fact that we are in a new world; but I am loth to believe that this outbreak of militarism means all that the enemies of the Government say that it must imply. If all Boerdom and Dutch Afrikanderdom is engaged in a conspiracy against the position of England in South Africa, it is as yet an unconscious conspiracy. Whatever conscious design exists is confined to a very few amongst the Republican forwards, and it will never materialise into anything formidable unless we take a course that bands the Dutchmen together and then prove ourselves incapable of coping with them when they stand as one man. These are reflections that one cannot indulge in without considering the potential war as a practical affair apart from any question as to its rights and wrongs, and it seems to me that the great majority of our people, together with their rulers, have learned but little since the cruel lessons we received in 1881. There still remains the same arrogance of tone, the same inveterate contempt of the enemy, the same blind confidence that "a little British army goes a d—d long way." We are confirmed in these delusions by successes over unarmed savages and judicious hesitation to try conclusions with our fleet. These things, how-

ever, have nothing to do with the case. Amongst all those who clamour so loudly for the franchise and I know not what besides, there does not appear to be one who realises how tremendously the Boers are strengthened, how terribly our infantry would be handicapped, by the conditions of modern war. The Boer forced to fight within reach of a charge, whether by lance or bayonet, with horses few and poor, no money and virtually no supplies, proved himself a foeman not to be despised. What may we expect now that he is armed with the long-range magazine rifle, that will keep our men from ever pressing home an attack, admirably mounted and supplied with everything his heart can desire? At Pretoria they realise to the full how tremendously their strength is increased, and their criticism of our forces seems to me to be most intelligent and most just. One of their commandants said to me, only a day or two ago, in no spirit of vainboasting and certainly with no desire for war, because he is one of the most Progressive members of the Raad, "Your *rooi-baatjes* will have a very bad time. I can't discover a single point in their favour except numbers, and I don't believe you will be able to put men enough in the field to wear us down."

Such preparation as there is in hand on our side is concentrated in Natal, where I was assured that things were so well forward that a force could march out of Ladysmith almost any day and get to Pretoria without a single check. I have been to Ladysmith, in order to satisfy my own doubts as to the accuracy of these representations, and I came away thinking of Mynheer Van Wyk's famous speech in the Cape House of Assembly. There is certainly not at Ladysmith force enough to fur-

nish a single breakfast for the Transvaal Boer, to say nothing of his possible allies. The trouble is that we cannot now do what we ought to have done three years ago. Relations are already so strained, and the Boers have such unbounded confidence in themselves, that if a British force were now to advance from Ladysmith, for the purpose of forming a post at Laing's Nek, it is almost certain that they would find the position seized before they could get there. While we had in office at the Cape what must, I suppose, be called a friendly Ministry, it was still possible to take up strong positions at Mafeking and Fourteen Streams; but it would be as much as Mr. Schreiner's place is worth, in the present temper of his supporters, to afford facilities for defensive preparations, to say nothing of operations of another character.

Altogether it is a most unhappy situation. The inner circle at Pretoria seem to be bent upon forcing on an immediate crisis, and our people are ignorantly playing their game. The affair at the Amphitheatre was a very bad business. I happened to be at Pretoria on the day when it occurred, and was lunching at the club with Esselen, Smuts, and Walrond, Milner's private secretary, who was paying a visit to the Transvaal during the absence in England of his chief. Smuts, who is still very young, was in a state of suppressed excitement all the time and could not keep his seat for two minutes together. His tone throughout was just about as bad and provocative as it could be. He is more violent even than Reitz in his hatred of Rhodes, and he will not admit that there are shortcomings at all on the side of the Boer Government. Ten minutes after the party broke up, I was informed, on excellent authority,

that there was going to be a great row in Johannesburg, as the *Uitlander* meeting would be scattered to the winds, and it would be fortunate if there were no bloodshed. I hastened back to the Rand, and found the whole place in a great turmoil, with the Boers and their friends offensively exultant and our people correspondingly depressed. The riot was transparently got up to order. There was no possible excuse for the authorities except the reckless and provocative language of the *Star*. I went out of my way to address (privately, of course) a strong remonstrance to the directors, but got nothing but a saucy answer for my pains. They might at any rate have given me credit for good intentions. The paramount influence there just now is one Evans, who came out a year or two ago as Sir Edgar Vincent's representative. He is understood to have something more than a nodding acquaintance with the High Commissioner, whom he knew in the East, and on the strength of that and his new position with the Ecksteins he poses as a great authority on public affairs. He means well, no doubt, but he does not happen to know South Africa; and notions of management derived from the other end of the Continent are likely to be productive of unexpected results when tried upon our sturdy and intractable Boers.

A dozen times a day, when I protest against every angry Leaguesman in Commissioner Street threatening the Government of the country with the vengeance of England, I am asked, "Well, are we to go on for ever like this?" And they seem to think the whole fabric of Afrikanderism can be demolished at a word. Not so, I imagine, any responsible servant of the Crown, whether soldier or statesman, who has eyes to see and

ears to hear, to whom the task may be assigned. I was engaged on my mail one morning in the Rand Club, when who should come into the writing-room, of which I was at the time the solitary occupant, but Sir William Butler, then on the way to Ladysmith—or was it returning thence?—for the purpose of seeing what all this enteric means. Sir William had been driven about the place by the gentleman whose guest he was, and had just dropped into the club for the purpose of writing a letter. As he closed the door behind him, erect and every inch a soldier, almost as fine a figure of a man as he was twenty years ago, he heaved an audible sigh—he clearly thought he was in the room alone—and a look of profound anxiety came over his grand face that set me wondering whether the thoughts that were passing through his mind were anything like my own. . . . If one could but feel as much confidence in everybody's sober judgment and discretion as in his!

THE CAPE ELECTIONS—AND AFTER

[September 1898]

THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION REVIEWED

It is well that at all events one London newspaper should be found to question the wisdom of the scarcely elegant allusion to Mr. Hofmeyr which Mr. Rhodes made in his recent speech at Klipdam. It would be better still if Mr. Rhodes were told outright, not by one London newspaper, but by all, that such methods of conducting a serious political controversy do not commend themselves to his countrymen at home, whatever may be the case with the rough river diggers in the mining camps on the Vaal. The *Westminster Gazette* has suggested, by way of extenuation, that Mr. Rhodes knows his public. It is true that he ought to know it; but, great as have been the changes that have taken place in South Africa in recent years, I doubt very much whether anything more than the most infinitesimal fragment of his own followers will approve of such language applied to such a man. For it is notorious that Mr. Hofmeyr deserved better treatment at Mr. Rhodes's hands. There is not in all South Africa a more upright man, a more faithful friend, a more candid politician—I will go further and say no more loyal subject of his sovereign than Jan Hofmeyr. I have the advantage of having known him intimately for more than a quarter of a century; I have fought shoulder to shoulder with him in many a stiff fight; I have fought against him; and I venture to affirm that, amongst all the unfortunate consequences of the Jameson Raid, none

are more deplorable than the habit to which it has given rise of representing Mr. Hofmeyr, Mr. Schreiner, Mr. Merriman, Mr. Sauer and those who act with them as faithless and disloyal to the British connection.

This charge, it is true, has been levelled against some of them with so much frequency during the past twenty years that by this time they are probably case-hardened to it and accept it as part of the legitimate tactics of the game. But, on the other hand, it is possible that they do not view the matter with so much equanimity, that they are not indifferent to the odium with which it is sought to cover them in the eyes of their fellow-subjects, and in that event it is obvious that the evil seed which is now being sown broadcast with such reckless hands may be fruitful of serious consequences in the years to come.

It is not alone the irresponsible sensation-mongers of the halfpenny press who are guilty of publishing these calumnies abroad. Mr. Rhodes and Sir Gordon Sprigg are both appealing to the electors on the ground that it is the supremacy of the Queen in South Africa which is at stake, and the effect of their defeat—if they should be defeated—would no doubt be heightened by the terms in which they are challenging the verdict of the constituencies. In good truth, however, the issue which they seek to raise is an utterly false issue, and I write these lines in the hope that our countrymen at home will not be misled. The followers of Mr. Rhodes and Sir Gordon Sprigg may no doubt be willing and anxious to affirm their unalterable loyalty; but it must not be too readily supposed that their opponents are declaring for severance of the links that bind or for anything of the kind. On the contrary, they are not less loyal than

those who claim to possess a monopoly of the precious virtue, and they seek only to affirm by their votes that the Cape Colony has no right to interfere in a manner that would be resented by the Boer Government in the internal affairs of the Transvaal—that and nothing more. It was not Mr. Hofmeyr, but Mr. Rhodes, who gave £10,000 in aid of a movement intended to violate the unity of the Empire; it was not Mr. Hofmeyr, but Mr. Rhodes, who declared that the interests of South Africa required "the elimination of the Imperial factor"; but it was Mr. Hofmeyr who conceived the most practicable plan of Imperial Federation that has yet been suggested, and it is Mr. Hofmeyr who has more than once risked his reputation with his countrymen to prevent a rupture between England and the Transvaal, that rupture which Mr. Rhodes and his associates have been consistently endeavouring for at least three years past to bring about.

An attempt is being made to represent the attitude of the Dutch elector and his representatives towards the battleship *Afrikander* as a test of loyalty; but nothing could be more fallacious, I had almost said more idiotic, than this. It is not only the Boer from the back country who views that extraordinary projected gift with dislike. Sir Gordon Sprigg was never authorised by Parliament or by his colleagues in the Cabinet to promise anything of the kind, and his conduct can only be explained on the supposition that his patriotic emotions got the better of his judgment amid all the unwonted attentions that were paid to him and other colonial premiers in the Jubilee year. Any reasonable, well-considered scheme of colonial contribution to the Imperial navy would, I am convinced, meet with just as cordial support in the Cape Colony as in any part of the Empire; but the gift of a

battleship could not possibly be considered as coming within the limits of the specified conditions; and in view of the fact that the offer was made by Sir Gordon Sprigg of his own motion (under the circumstances described), and of the opposition *on practical grounds* which the suggestion has evoked, I venture to think—and I claim to be not less loyal than the alien scribes who are good enough to teach us our duty in these matters—that the Imperial Government would be well advised in releasing the colony from any real or implied obligation in the matter at the earliest possible date.

It is too early as yet to predict with certainty what will be the outcome of these elections now pending; but it is not too early to point to some at least of the morals that arise out of the situation with which we are confronted. Good statesmanship in South Africa has always been governed by one cardinal maxim, and that is that Dutch and English are so nearly balanced in numbers and in influence, to say nothing of their equal restiveness under oppression, that the peace of the country cannot be preserved if either attempts to obtain political ascendency over the other. That cardinal maxim has been set at defiance on more than one occasion, but always with the same result, and I venture to affirm that there is no South African of either nationality, whose opinion is at all worth having, who does not view with apprehension and with horror the possibilities which the present struggle has already brought to light. The true arbiters at this election are neither the mass of English nor the mass of Dutch, but the Bastards of Stellenbosch, the Hottentots of Kat River, and the native voters in two or three of the frontier constituencies. I am not one of those who have ever laboured under that species of madness known

as negrophobia; but the spectacle of Mr. Rhodes on the one hand, and Mr. Hofmeyr on the other, kow-towing to our coloured brethren for their suffrages, and appealing to them to save either British supremacy or Afrikander freedom, is enough to make even Mr. Saul Solomon turn in his grave, and I ask myself what will happen if this inchoate third party should ever become possessed of a leader equal to his opportunities and grow even remotely conscious of its strength.

It boots nothing to put the blame for this unprecedented situation either on these shoulders or on those. The blame, indeed, is not to be found all on one side. If Pretoria and Bloemfontein have been too slow in adapting themselves to the new conditions that the rush of gold-miners brought upon them, Johannesburg and Cape Town have been too impatient in expecting men who belong really to the seventeenth century to project themselves into the twentieth in the course of a single decade; but the question which those who are responsible for the peace of the country ought now to be asking themselves is whether all government will not soon become virtually impossible unless some amicable solution of present misunderstandings be attained.

That contingency is manifestly nearer to us than some appear to imagine. All accounts agree in stating that the Assembly elections can give nothing more than the barest majority to whichsoever side may be able to call itself the victor in the end, and it is understood that the side in question will promptly proceed to use its victory for the purpose of passing a Redistribution Bill that shall ensure to it the undoubted predominance for an indefinite term of years. The real significance of these declarations can only be that the deplorable state of things existing in the

Transvaal, instead of being viewed as an example to be avoided, has brought about the singular result that the leaders on both sides are prepared to reproduce the same conditions in the Cape. That, however, would be such an obvious and unalloyed calamity that whatever authority the Imperial Government may be able to exert, whatever influence may belong to the English press, will surely be put forth with a view of preventing anything of the kind.

I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of these elections; but one would have to be as blind as a bat if he did not perceive that they may conceivably be attended by results of the most momentous character. Frank and cordial good-will at the Colonial Office would at this moment be a blessing of the most inestimable value; but we have, unfortunately, no assurance that this particular quality exists. On the contrary, there is too much reason for believing that Mr. Chamberlain finds peculiar satisfaction and delight in seeing the waters around him troubled. The Boer view of Mr. Chamberlain may be right or it may be wrong; but it is important to know what the Boer view is, and it commends itself to one's intelligence as probably correct. It is this: that Mr. Chamberlain has never forgiven himself for being a party to the retrocession of the Transvaal in 1881, and he will leave no stone unturned to wipe out that error if he can. As we know him now, he is not believed to have been capable, even in 1881, of subscribing to the doctrines enunciated so powerfully by Mr. Gladstone in Mid-Lothian without a mental reservation. It never entered into his calculations at that time that the Transvaal was more rich in minerals than any other country on the face of the earth, and hence he believes that he was fooled into compliance with a surrender that he would have resisted to the death, as

he resisted the Home Rule Bill, if he had known the value of what was to be given up. There is not a Boer who believes that he has loyally accepted the consequences that ensue upon the Conventions of 1881 and 1884, and if I may judge by a somewhat close observation of all that has happened since Mr. Chamberlain took the seals of the Colonial Office in 1895, I, for one, should be slow to affirm that this doubt is possessed of no foundation in fact.

But is it possible to imagine anything more unfortunate than that this mutual prejudice and distrust should exist? Is it not easy to perceive that out of these conditions serious events may arise that could readily be averted if Mr. Chamberlain's place were filled by some Minister whose antecedents did not arouse so much suspicion as the part he has played in the South African drama could not fail to create? More than one circumstance has pointed of late to the advisability of re-shuffling the cards in the Ministerial pack, and there is probably no instance in which the necessity for change is so urgent or so obvious as the one we are now considering.

Let the issue of these Cape elections be what it will, there can be little doubt that they will mark a stage, and a most momentous stage, in the history of South Africa. The indications are that Sir Gordon Sprigg will be ejected, and that the new Administration will be formed, for the first time avowedly, under the auspices of the Afrikander Bond. It remains to be seen whether such an Administration will receive the fair-play to which it is entitled at the hands of the Imperial Government and the English and Colonial press. The chances are that it will not. So little is

the wisdom with which the world is governed that I can well conceive the superhuman efforts that will almost certainly be put forth to frustrate, rather than encourage, the labours that such a Government can hardly fail to make to bring about a better state of feeling in South Africa generally. A Bond Government in Cape Town will mean much to Mr. Kruger. Relieved as he will be of the feeling of apprehension with which he has hitherto been haunted, he will be enabled, if wisdom has not deserted his councils, to set about the long-deferred task of conciliating the *Uitlanders*. It is, however, quite upon the cards that he may take the view that events have brought within his reach a wholly different kind of opportunity. Inflamed with the idea of his own military strength, emboldened by the neglect of the Imperial Government to take the most effectual guarantees against a rupture, encouraged by ideas of European support, and misconstruing the demonstration of sympathy at the Cape, it is conceivable, to say the least—especially as he seems now to be assured of Free State support, let him do what he will—that he may think the season as favourable as any that he can be destined to enjoy, not for undermining the foundations of the Republic by admitting to burgher rights those who are not with him heart and soul, but for gaining a position of independence not inferior to that of his neighbours across the Vaal. And, who knows, may he not be dreaming even wilder dreams? Anyway, there is clearly such a mass of explosive material about, passions have been raised to such a pitch, that the provocative activity of Mr. Rhodes on the one hand, denouncing this man as a traitor and that as a coward, and the immovable

apathy of the Imperial Government on the other, are truly incomprehensible unless they can be regarded as part of a settled plan for luring and egging Mr. Kruger on to his ruin.

Incredible as this may appear, it is well that we should not blind our eyes to what is going on at the Cape. The speech of Sir Gordon Sprigg at East London was not quite so gratuitous as it appeared to many on this side. It has to be read in connection with the answers given by Mr. Rhodes to some of the pertinent questions that were put to him when he was before the Select Committee of the House of Commons. He then said, it will be remembered, that he was not such a fool as to risk his position, and all else that he did risk, with a view of setting up President J. B. Robinson in place of President Kruger; and he added that his aims would be the same in the future as they had been in the past, only he would seek to accomplish them by "strictly constitutional means." From the position then taken up Mr. Rhodes has never receded. He and those who act with him are committed to the policy of overthrowing the Republics if they can (I say the Republics, because the Orange Free State would not stand twenty-four hours after the overthrow of the Transvaal), while those who oppose him—oppose him in many instances with the deepest regret on personal grounds—hold that we are forbidden by considerations alike of honour and of policy to entertain such aims. We may deplore as much as any one the existence of the Republics; we may feel even more incensed than Mr. Rhodes does that the Boers of the Transvaal should have proved themselves, in certain

respects which touch our own interests and our own well-being, so unworthy of the independence they are permitted to enjoy; but we hold that things have taken place in South Africa that a nation like England is debarred from any attempt to undo, and that those who have been put forward, or have put themselves forward, as the champions of an impossible mechanical unity have invariably proved themselves the deadliest foes of real union, of true concord, of progress, and of peace.

Who could have meant better by us than Lord Carnarvon? Who better than Sir Bartle Frere? And yet how miserably they failed! How inevitable they made it, by reason of their readiness to lay violent hands upon the ark of a political covenant, that impartial history should record the verdict that they failed to advance by a single day the cause they had at heart, the cause in which they made such appalling sacrifices of peace, of treasure, and of blood! What Englishman worthy of the name (no matter what his views as to the value of Equatorial Africa) could do other than sympathise with Mr. Rhodes in his great conception of securing the vast interior for his countrymen? And yet it is a fact which brooks no denial that the man who drew a ring fence round the Transvaal, preventing the *voortrekkers*, who are the very backbone of the Boer power, from indulging their habit of clearing away before the advance of civilisation, was unwittingly the worst enemy the *Uitlander* ever had. Not less of enmity was there in the mad attempt to get up an insurrection for which none of the essential conditions existed; nor is there less of substantial hostility to our interests now because the

aim professed is that of reasserting British supremacy over those portions of the country that were lost to the Crown through our own deliberate act. Mr. Rhodes is constitutionally incapable of recognising any finality in conditions, no matter how they may have been established, of which it is his pleasure to disapprove. It may be that he is not alone in his openly avowed desire to set back the clock. It may be, on the other hand, that the Boers do Mr. Chamberlain an injustice in their estimate of his aims and character. It is quite certain that they do no injustice to Mr. Rhodes. His aims are open and avowed, and it will make for peace, for the possibility of a good understanding with England and the chance that the *Uitlander* will secure reasonable reforms, if there should presently be in office at the Cape a Ministry that the Boers will not suspect of any inclination to subvert their independence, whether by "constitutional" or other means, provided always that the efforts of that Ministry are not undermined.

I have no authority whatsoever to speak in the name of Sir Alfred Milner's prospective advisers; but it requires no stretch of imagination to suppose that, while they will be scrupulously careful to keep within the bounds which the just susceptibilities of their neighbours impose, they will not fail to make Mr. Kruger and his Government acquainted with their views of what the well-being of all South Africa demands, and that is that he should frankly abandon his idea of Continental alliances, and manifest some real earnest of his professed desire for more amicable relations with Her Majesty's Government, and that he should, by some means or other, terminate the intolerable scandal of refusing to

those whose industry is the sole pillar of the State all voice in the imposition of the public burdens and the distribution of the public funds.

This question of *Uitlanders'* rights, so apparently simple on the face of it, is not, however, without difficulty when it comes to be approached from a practical point of view. Mr. Rhodes, in his free and easy manner, says that nothing is required but equal political rights for every white man south of the Zambezi, and those who are not prepared to see in this demand a sovereign specific for all the evils wherewith South Africa is afflicted are at once set down as advocates of inequality or as "traitors to the cause," for whom hanging, drawing, and quartering were a fate far too good. But when it is seen that such an apparently fair demand is regarded by the Boers as tantamount to an invitation to commit the happy despatch, let us be frank enough to acknowledge that we cannot in reason, human nature being what it is, expect them to grant it without guarantees and counter-considerations that cannot be very easily or very speedily arranged.

Opponent of the Transvaal Government as I found myself compelled to be throughout the major part of a lengthy residence in the Republic, I was never able to appreciate the correctitude of the course followed by so many of my countrymen with regard to what they termed their political rights. They had not the remotest desire or intention to sacrifice their birthright as British subjects for such a mess of pottage as they would have gained by becoming Transvaal burghers; but they thought they might hold to the one while securing for themselves all the rights and privileges of the other. They would have been horrified, for example, and rightly so,

at the idea of being called upon to bear arms against their mother country, and yet it is obvious that they were not fitted for the status they sought to acquire unless they were prepared to go even to that length in vindication of their new citizenship. They endeavoured, I know, to get over their difficulties by means of the advice said to have been given by the Imperial law officers, who hold that, in view of the Queen's residuary jurisdiction over the Transvaal, a British subject does not divest himself of his nationality when he acquires the status of a burgher in that Republic; but the Transvaal oath is one of renunciation as well as allegiance; it is for the Boers to interpret it; and they can hardly be blamed for their hesitation in allowing that oath to to be taken by men who have never concealed the conviction that, in the one case in which its value could be tested, they would not deem themselves under any obligation to observe its terms.

Englishmen at home will have the candour to recognise in the conditions that exist in the Transvaal a problem that can only be dealt with by wise and far-seeing statesmanship, by patience and self-reliance on the part of the people immediately concerned, and by friendly appeals from neighbours, and from the great protecting Power herself, rather than by a continual girding at the Boers as the living embodiment of every vice and shortcoming which it is possible to conceive. These conditions, we may freely admit, would have been different in the most essential particular if there had been less talk about our Imperial greatness during the past three years and a more practical recognition of Imperial responsibilities; but policy must be adapted to what is, not to what should have been. I have laboured

long enough in the cause of good government in the Transvaal to warrant my running the risk of being misunderstood when I say that, after all is said and done, the Kruger Administration is not quite so black as it is painted. It is not an ideal Government, to be sure; it is far from being up to date; it is not a Republic, as we understand a Republic, in anything but name; it persists in the foolish course of alienating those who should be its best friends; but, with all its faults, it has given the gold-fields the best mining law in the world; it has made railways at a rate never attempted in the Cape Colony; and if it went to the Continent for the means of undertaking these important works, it was because all assistance was denied to it both in England and at the Cape. If it halts now in the path of progress, as undoubtedly it is halting, it is because certain capitalists are banded together, wisely or unwisely I will not pretend to determine, for the purpose of thwarting its endeavours in the money market until it yields in some degree to their demands; and although it has taxed the *Uitlander* with unfair and unmerciful discrimination, and has spent much of its bountiful revenues on objects which we cannot approve, its people and its Government have ever betrayed a rare and most wholesome aversion to saddling the country with unnecessary debt. When one comes to think of the riot that might have been run if the fields had been located in some parts of the world, we may perceive some set-off even to the misfortune of having such a ruler as Oom Paul. Mr. Kruger's very latest declaration is that his one desire is that his people should be regarded as a civilised community, and although I shall doubtless be told that the man must be a congenital idiot who would

attach the slightest importance to anything of that character that Mr. Kruger may say, I do venture to believe that he does not want the Republic to lag behind the rest of South Africa in any matter that relates either to material progress or to individual liberty; and that, when he once conceives himself free of the danger by which his Government has been openly and covertly menaced for some years past—a danger he has taken most inappropriate means to avert—his milder instincts will get the better of the rude ideas which have been in such painful evidence of late.

But the one condition precedent to his embarking on the wide and perilous ocean of reform is that he should be assured not only of the good faith of the *Uitlanders*, but of the friendly co-operation and support of his neighbours, and guarded against violent interference with the essentials of the *status quo*. Alive as I know them to be to their undoubted obligations to relieve the present tension if they can, I am satisfied that the coming Ministers at the Cape will not be dead to the opportunities which their friendly disposition towards the Transvaal Government cannot fail to present; and we may await with patience some early effort on their part that will show that, if the end in view be a peaceful and truly united South Africa, all existing rights being preserved, they can employ means that will gain early and unequivocal success where other means have, from the very outset, been doomed by their very nature most abjectly to fail. The most obvious means of effecting the object in view would be that of a Conference similar to that which has lately assembled, with the happiest prospects of eventual success, for the purpose of removing causes of difference now existing between the Dominion

of Canada and the United States; and it is to be hoped that the new Administration will take some such project speedily in hand. Hitherto the Transvaal Government has deemed it necessary, partly by reason of its treaty obligations, and partly in consequence of mistaken ideas with regard to the sacred subject of its independence, to hold aloof from South African Conferences; but it is manifestly impossible, if a Bond Premier should send out invitations to a semi-private gathering, at which representatives of all the different Governments in the country would consider the means by which the peace and well-being of all South Africa could be promoted, without interfering with the status of any of its component parts, that the Transvaal Government should refuse to entertain the proposal, or that it should turn a deaf ear to the recommendations that came to it from such a source.

Such a Conference would be far more likely to be attended with useful results than the meeting between himself and Mr. Kruger, at which everything was to be settled, so airily suggested by Mr. Rhodes. Between Mr. Kruger and himself, though Mr. Rhodes does not appear to know it, there is a wide gulf fixed, and it may be doubted whether in this world that gulf will ever be bridged. Certainly Mr. Rhodes will not be qualified for any meeting with his formidable opponent until he has been made to understand that the people and the Government of this country, while deeply regretting the errors of policy that have led to the loss of any part of South Africa to the Empire, will not allow either him or any one else, in their name and on their behalf, to scheme for the subversion of a Government with which we have no cause of quarrel yet declared. It may be, of course,

that when that decision is borne in upon his obstinate intelligence, Achilles will retire in sulks to his tent; but not even that calamity is one which an Empire founded upon public faith and public law should prove itself unable to survive. What applies to Mr. Rhodes in the matter of a Conference applies in almost equal degree to any representative of Her Majesty's Government. Seeing that they have allowed several years to pass without taking the steps which the most elementary conceptions of sound policy should have dictated, they cannot now approach the matter as though they were prepared to meet Mr. Kruger on equal terms so far as readiness for war is concerned. They must be content to employ the good offices of the Colonial Government, or they may find that time lost in military preparations cannot easily be regained.

With the position made thus clear, I venture to think that we need not even yet despair of Mr. Kruger, and that we may soon be able to perceive in the triumph of the Afrikander Bond the only means that the crimes of some and the blunders of others have yet left to us of regaining the friendship of our neighbours and the affection of a large number of our fellow-subjects who have been alienated from us in feeling far too long. None would rejoice more heartily at any legitimate triumph that might fall to Mr. Rhodes than those who hold, as I do, that his aims are unlawful and his methods indefensible so far as these Republics are concerned; but when it comes to a question between our personal regard for a leader, whose qualities we can all recognise, and the honour of the English name and people, that we claim to reverence and the right to uphold not less than he does, then we can scarcely hesitate in our choice.

We can fortunately vindicate our independence while yielding to none in our admiration for some of the qualities displayed by Mr. Rhodes, for some of his methods and some of his aims; but it is to be feared that he himself—or, perhaps, it should be said some of his hare-brained associates—has made that impossible to every Afrikander who sets the same store by his nationality as a good Scotsman, a good Irishman, or a good Welshman does by his, as a good Canadian or a good Australian soon will do. Imperialism used to be the enemy, but the enemy now is Rhodes; and that is a fact, deplore it as we may, that those whose first object is the happiness of their fellow-subjects cannot fail to take into account. It is not necessary as yet to relegate our South African difficulties to the category of those intractable propositions that can be dealt with only in one way; but it may easily become so if the people and the Government of this country fail to recognise the nature and the gravity of the case. A calm and comprehensive study of the history of that country, combined with an intimate knowledge of the people of the present generation, teaches that you can do almost anything with them so long as your aims are kept within the bounds of right and reason, and your methods are fair and above-board. Not the less emphatically does it teach that there is no country in the world in which force and fraud are weapons which it is more dangerous and more futile to employ. If South Africa is to be spared the horrors of civil war, if Dutch and English are once again to hold one another in mutual esteem and respect, working hand in hand with the common object of promoting the welfare of their common country, it can only be by a frank abandonment and renunciation for ever

of the methods which failed so signally when attempted with the Transvaal annexation in 1876, and yet more egregiously when tried again twenty years afterwards. Calumny, treachery, and intrigue will not succeed in South Africa where reason and plain dealing fail. Open hostility if you will. An outspoken declaration that circumstances have arisen which were never contemplated when you agreed to haul down the flag at Pretoria, an open intimation — if you are ready to make good your challenge—that the Republics stand in your way and their weakness must yield to your might, accepting such reservations of local liberty as you may be pleased to accord them: this would be an attitude more defensible by far, and probably less to be resented, than the course of conduct to which these struggling communities have been subjected ever since the mineral wealth of South Africa was first revealed.

CONSOLIDATION OR EXPANSION?

[April 1897]

REFLECTIONS FROM DELAGOA BAY

When I arrived here (Lorenço Marques) a day or two ago, it was to find the Bay all alive with the vessels of a flying squadron which Admiral Rawson had brought unexpectedly to port. Such a congregation of Her Majesty's ships is not likely to have been made without some serious purpose; but it is difficult to discover with any degree of certainty what there is precisely in the wind. The Admiral himself is brimming over with courtesy and hospitality, as our sailors ever are, but absolutely sphinx-like as regards the motive of his visit or the probable duration of his stay. The quidnuncs, of course, will have it—as they have had it at any time for a good many years past—that the Union Jack is about to be hoisted over this portion of the Portuguese province of Mozambique, and the speculation in shares and real estate which has been already stimulated by these convictions seems not unlikely to reach a giddy height that it may be found anything but easy to sustain. The only authentic evidence obtainable seems hardly to warrant the conclusion that the longshore men are accepting as a matter of course. The Admiral allowed us over his beautiful flagship, the *St. George*, and we were told that the only man in the cells was a poor devil who, weary with long waiting for the expected *dénouement*, had clothed himself in the Union Jack a few nights before, jumped overboard, swam to Inyak, planted the precious emblem on the highest point in the island, and

returned to his ship, very nearly causing an international complication by the surprise which his irregular but characteristic conduct had created. The significance of the story was not lost upon one at all events of those to whom it was narrated, and my own idea is that the presence of the squadron must be taken to indicate not the early cession of Delagoa Bay to England, but a resolution on the part of Her Majesty's Government not to suffer the acquisition of territorial or quasi-territorial rights, even to the smallest area, by Germany, France, the Transvaal, or any other Power.

Lorenço Marques is not quite the "beastly hole" it used to be; but it is still very far, indeed, from being an earthly paradise, and there is an air of uncertain possession on the part of its rulers which is not wholly to be accounted for by the presence of a foreign squadron in the outer Bay. The fact is that there is a natural association between this littoral and its hinterland which accidents of prior discovery and subsequent settlement cannot be allowed for ever to set aside, and since it is out of the question that Portugal should assert any sort of supremacy over the Transvaal, the power which is paramount on the Highveld must, some day or other, be supreme at Delagoa Bay. The Portuguese hold is feeble and precarious in presence of such sturdy persons as Mr. Kruger and his burghers on the one hand, and the great maritime Power on the other, to say nothing of the ambitions of the two other Powers already mentioned who would get a firm footing here if they could. South Africa must one day become a great country; it cannot for ever remain a mere concourse of fortuitous atoms; and when that day arrives Portuguese sovereignty south of the Zambezi cannot be suffered to remain. It

is at present something more than an inconvenience. In the quick changes of the political *kaleidoscope* it may become a danger with which England will have to grapple very firmly indeed, unless she would have her position in South Africa menaced even more seriously than it is at the present time.

Portuguese statesmen are not blind to the inherent weakness of their country's position. Nothing but the fears of a popular uprising have restrained them even so far from taking the course which the sound policy dictated by an intelligent anticipation of events would suggest. It is, however, one thing to relinquish territory without any corresponding *quid pro quo*, and quite another matter to part with it in exchange for valuable consideration elsewhere. I have long thought, and still believe, that the best solution of the difficulty, the most feasible way of guarding the future of South Africa, securing British interests and saving Lusitanian pride, would be for England to cede to Portugal that portion of Rhodesia which is situate north of the Zambezi, receiving in exchange that portion of the province of Mozambique which is situate south of that great river. The things to be exchanged may not, it is true, possess an equal value in the eyes of those whom the transaction would mainly concern; but the balance thus accruing might be made up by financial aid in the development of the wide possession, stretching from ocean to ocean, that Portugal would thus secure, and by a guarantee of Portuguese sovereignty therein against all comers. The fact that Portugal would thus be thrust back, as it were, several degrees nearer the line does not seem to be an objection of any great moment in view of the circumstance

that the Portuguese thrive in a climate in which Europeans of northern origin can scarcely live. The price we should have to pay for the consummation of this bargain would no doubt be considerable, larger by far than it would have been if England had availed herself of the opportunity of purchasing the Bay close on the heels of the M'Mahon award; but let him who foresaw a tithe of the remarkable developments that have taken place in South Africa during the past twenty years be the first to fling a stone at the Government which allowed that unique occasion to slip.

This re-arrangement of territories would, it is true, involve the frank abandonment of the all-British causeway from Cairo to the Cape; but with the best will in the world, with every desire to see eye to eye with Mr. Rhodes in his great projects with respect to the far interior, I have never been able to persuade myself that this was an enterprise on which it would be prudent for the English Government and the English people to embark. The less that we have to do with Equatorial Africa the better for us as a nation and as individuals. Ever since the idea was first mooted, I have made it my especial business to discover, if possible, advantages of a substantial character that would outweigh the objections which are obvious on the face of such a project; but the effort has been in vain. I take note of what every competent authority says with regard to the nature of the equatorial region; I survey the physical and moral wreck presented by nearly every white man who has essayed to make his home in that portion of the earth's surface; and I ask myself whether we are not surrendering our claim to

be regarded as shrewd and common-sense people when we seriously contest the claims of other nations to dominion in those latitudes. Let them have the whole of the equatorial region, and let them have joy of their possessions. If England can but consolidate and conciliate her dependencies south of the Zambezi, she may be content to leave to other nations the task of extending the blessings of civilisation to the vast but pestilential regions beyond that stream.

The Cape to Cairo craze was born of no South African aspiration. It is at best but a red herring drawn across the scent of political righteousness and wisdom. When the colossal blunder of 1895 loosened the hold which Mr. Rhodes held until then over the imaginations of his fellow-countrymen, it was necessary to start some new hare by way of re-captivating their wayward fancy. The very magnificence of the Cape to Cairo project was just the kind of thing to appeal to the imagination of an Imperial people; it possessed the one inestimable advantage that it would not probably be found out, no matter how ill-judged the conception, in the lifetime of any man now playing his part on the stage of public affairs; it might possibly induce even some of those in South Africa who had fallen away from the Rhodesian standard to forget and forgive a single indiscretion in their admiration of a leader who was still capable of evolving such colossal schemes. To an extent, it must be confessed, the magic is already working; but with the sole exception of those who are interested in one way or another in exploiting the British public, I find neither serious English colonist nor honest Afrikander whose eyes are ever cast with genuine longing across the great river. As an alternative route to England, the idea must be

worthy of a lunatic asylum in the estimation of those who have experience both of the ocean voyage and of long railway journeys even in South Africa south of the Limpopo. As a trade route it is equivalent to an attempt to force water up hill. As a financial enterprise it would have been scouted from the very beginning if it had not been part and parcel of that ill-regulated megalomania which has taken such extraordinary hold of a certain order of minds, and which our countrymen at home will soon have to rue, if only because of the bitterness and jealousy which it evokes amongst other nations, unless a halt be called. To tack such a project to the serious and legitimate endeavour to consolidate and pacify the white man's country south of the Zambezi would be to commit a grievous error, involving the new dominion in continual turmoil for years and years to come, dissipating resources which are one and all required for the prosecution of the immediate end in view. I hold that, in the present state of our knowledge, the interior of Equatorial Africa is not worth our having, and whether that opinion be well founded or otherwise, I am quite certain that the extension of British dominion beyond the Zambezi is an enterprise that the present generation can profitably allow to wait.

In putting forward these opinions I am sure that you will not suspect me of having lapsed into the condition of a Little Englander. I am as keen as ever I was upon the extension of British rule; but I am afraid lest, in the wild endeavour to grasp that which is not worth our obtaining, we may forego the opportunity of acquiring that which it is essential for the permanence of British rule in this continent for our country to possess. I dread the possibility of our being entangled in inglorious wars in

equatorial swamps, while our position is still insecure and chaos reigns over vast and temperate regions in our rear, where hostility to our predominance is growing more pronounced and more formidable day by day. Just as I am in favour of arrangements being entered into for a peaceful elimination of the Portuguese factor from this side of the Zambezi, so am I in favour of an earnest endeavour being made to bring about the amicable withdrawal of the Germans from the position they nominally occupy in the territory north of the Orange River. The advent of German rule in that region was another of the misfortunes attributable to the want of prescience and understanding on the part of our own statesmen, colonial as well as imperial. Bismarck only annexed the country, under pressure of public opinion, when he found that we were unprepared to accept the responsibilities inseparable from the control we had claimed without any serious endeavour to make it good. Without Walwich Bay, which we reserved in dog-in-the-manger fashion, the country is certainly valueless. Probably it would be valueless even with Walwich Bay. At any rate Germany has made no serious attempt at colonisation, and the idea is probably correct that she only keeps her hand upon the country as a pawn in a greater game. She has no apparent interest for standing in the way of England in that part of the world unless she contemplates the possibility of disputing with England, at some distant period, her supremacy in South Africa as a whole, and that would seem to be a contingency too remote to enter into the sphere of practical politics. She has, on the other hand, a very real interest in the creation of a settled order under which her subjects would enjoy

advantages and opportunities not inferior to those which British subjects would themselves enjoy.

Germans are already to be met with in every part of British South Africa. Their natural and loyal disposition to trade with their mother country instead of with ours provokes neither jealousy nor hindrances. They are ideal colonists. They are welcomed with open arms if they manifest a desire to throw in their lot with the power that is paramount in the land in which they have made their new homes; their susceptibilities are respected, their rights preserved, if they elect to remain under the flag under which they were born. The only part of the country for which they evince no sort of predilection is German South-West Africa. A dependency of that character, which admits neither of expansion nor of internal development, is but a white elephant to the Power to which it belongs. To England, however, which needs to extirpate the idea that she is not alone amongst European Powers who have rights and interests south of the Zambezi, it is not less important that the German intrusion should be ended than it is to acquire control of Delagoa Bay. In this case also the elements would seem to exist for a "square deal." Just as it is essential for us to eliminate the foreign element in Namaqualand and Damaraland, so is it essential to the Germans, if they would turn their East African possessions to any valuable account, that they should acquire the sovereignty of Zanzibar, an island we now hold. They also might plead, for they are scarcely less hard than the Dutch at a bargain, that what it is here proposed to offer would be no fair equivalent for that which we expect to receive. Be that as it may, it is more important to us to round off our dominions in the temperate regions than it is to

hold on to those portions of the earth's surface on which it is impossible to hope that Englishmen will ever be able to live and thrive. Uganda is not so dear to the heart of our countrymen that it might not be thrown in as a make-weight if only by that means we could have South Africa to ourselves and secure that good understanding with the Kaiser and his people which it is more important for us to possess than the friendship and alliance of any nation on the face of the globe. We have so much in common with the Germans that it seems to me to argue something lacking in our statesmanship when we are not working hand-in-hand with them all the world over. The satisfaction that every Englishman must feel at the presence of this effective representation of his navy in these waters is tempered by the reflection that it is against a nation with whom we ought to be something more than friendly that our cannon and torpedoes are potentially to be employed.

AFTER THE RAID

[May 1896]

RHODES, RIGHT OR WRONG

THERE is chaos in South Africa. Shame and humiliation, tempered by impotent fury, mark the prevailing sense at home. Some of us, who had tasted the bitterness of all that happened at the Cape between '76 and '81, foresaw too clearly what would ensue if outsiders ventured to thrust their hands into the hornets' nest which the Boers have made in the Transvaal; but we were not able to make our voices heard. That was in December. January brought the *dénouement*, and with it came Mr. Chamberlain. There was no great difficulty in prognosticating his discomfiture from the moment we saw him lending an ear to advice from counsellors with axes of their own to grind and grudges of their own to settle. We viewed with dismay his crude and fantastic scheme of Home Rule. We nearly lost all faith in his practical statesmanship when we saw the precious weeks being wasted over an invitation to Mr. Kruger which that astute old Dopper was never in the least likely to accept.

There is no particular satisfaction in being able to say, "I told you so" when cause has been attended with its inevitable effect; but it may be hoped that some heed will now be paid to those who may claim attention from the fact that they have graduated in the school where intimate acquaintance with the Boer has been the teacher. Many of these have, to my certain knowledge, only been restrained by their especial

confidence in Mr. Chamberlain from giving loud voice, at any time during the past four months, to the discontent they have felt at his apparent inability to grapple with South African affairs. In his natural disgust at the final refusal of Mr. Kruger to come to England, the Secretary of State felt that he was called upon to do at all events something, and his last despairing effort took the shape of an intimation which has been taken to mean the veiled recall of the High Commissioner. Not much consolation is to be derived from that forcible feeble resource. The least kindly thing that will be said of Mr. Chamberlain, if he should persevere in a determination which is apparently no more popular in England than it is at the Cape, is that bad workmen always blame their tools. Sir Hercules Robinson may not come up to the standard of self-assertion which it is the fashion to require of a High Commissioner when the hot fit happens to be on; but he knows his duty to his Queen and country; he understands South Africa as it is understood by none of his possible successors, and if he hesitates to wave the flag and beat the drum, it is because experience has taught him that the hot fit is quickly and invariably succeeded by the cold. One thing Sir Hercules knows and appreciates better than any of his critics, and that is that the difficulty of dealing with South Africa is immeasurably increased by the interweaving of English and Dutch. If the country were all hostile, and the problem presented were one of conquest pure and simple, it would be easy enough; but pause may well be given to the statesman who perceives that the armed Dutchmen of the country practically hold as hostages the unarmed English of the

towns. Sir Hercules Robinson may be relied upon not to palter with his duty; but, on the other hand, he is incapable of shutting his eyes to difficulties which do not enter into the calculations of those who are egging on the Secretary of State to send him letters of recall.

It does not, however, follow from the fact of there being difficulties which cannot be ignored that Imperial statesmanship should turn its back upon South Africa as it has turned its back upon Armenia, and confess the task to be beyond its powers. I am one of those who have always held that the strength of the British hold upon South Africa would, under normal circumstances, be in inverse proportion to the vigour with which British supremacy might be asserted; but the circumstances have not been normal at any time during the past seven years, nor can they be so long as any section of the white population denies equal political rights to the other. In this denial may be found the Alpha and the Omega of the present situation. The enemies of Mr. Rhodes are anxious to make it appear that the present troubles had their origin in motives the most base and sordid. These critics not only wrong him, but they display a singular lack of acquaintance with the elementary conditions of the country which is now the cynosure of all eyes. There is one plank which is common to the platform of every political leader in South Africa—union of the whites and subjection of the blacks. The wiser ones amongst these statesmen have been content to hold the former at all events as a pious opinion. Every practical effort to advance the object has been attended with results so disastrous that it will probably now be abandoned. For myself, in view of the insuperable difficulty of the flag,

I could never understand why any practical politician should attempt it. Nothing would ever have given such a project any chance of success except some overwhelming menace which rendered it necessary to make common cause either against native foes or against external aggression. In the downfall of Mr. Rhodes history is but repeating itself. In 1876 Lord Carnarvon, seeking to distinguish himself by effecting the federation of South Africa under the British flag, took advantage of the apparent weakness of the Republican sentiment amongst the Boers to force on his project. The result we know: it was ruin both to the Minister and to the ill-fated servant of the Crown to whom he confided the practical execution of his scheme. Mr. Rhodes had precisely the same object in view. He essayed the dangerous feat of putting back the clock. To this end he took advantage of what he believed to be the inherent weakness and isolation of the Government at Pretoria, and the same fate that attended Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Carnarvon has befallen Dr. Jameson and himself. In the resentment which failure has evoked, it is asked, and quite naturally, why Mr. Rhodes should have taken it upon himself to put right the affairs of all South Africa; and why, even if he were properly invested with that mission, should he have been in such a violent hurry to accomplish the end in view that he could not even wait to make adequate preparation? These are questions from which the friends of the fallen statesman need scarcely shrink. Every action being now revealed, every motive canvassed, it is well that a clean breast should be a clean breast, and that final judgment should not be pronounced until all the environment of the drama has

been fully taken in, and the motives of the leading actors are clearly understood.

I do not feel called upon to defend the intervention of Mr. Rhodes in the affairs of the Transvaal. On the contrary, when I heard vague rumours of what was brewing I protested against it, in public and in private, as against one of those blunders which are worse even than crimes; but I experienced no difficulty in understanding how Mr. Rhodes came to make such a gigantic blunder all the same. The position had been tacitly accepted that he and the Chartered Company were to do for England in South Africa what the Imperial Government, with fears of a carping, cavilling, niggardly Parliament before its eyes, could not be prevailed upon to do for itself. Bechuanaland had been saved for the Empire in spite of the Imperial Government; German designs had been thwarted while Downing Street was more than half inclined to let the enterprising Teutons have their way; the flag was carried all the way from the Vaal River to the great lakes while High Commissioners were complaining that they could not get a single policeman without fights with my Lords of the Treasury which nearly broke their hearts. After the melancholy events of 1876–1881, with one brief interlude in 1884—for which again Mr. Rhodes was responsible—Imperial action in South Africa appeared to have become sterilised, and thus it came to pass that the experience of ten years, in which he had done much for the Imperial power without official sanction, sometimes in the face of official discouragements, but always with popular approval and official recognition in the end, had led Mr. Rhodes to think that he held a sort of general power of attorney from his Queen and country to do

virtually what he would in South Africa, and that he was not to be trammelled in his endeavours as though he were an administrator of the stereotyped description. Doubtless he was not warranted in this assumption; but those who carefully review the course of events in South Africa during the past ten years will not greatly blame him for making it. The Colonial Office, possessed with a holy horror of South Africa, was glad enough to throw upon the shoulders of the "Elizabethan prodigy" the burden of upholding the national interests which it had found itself unequal to protect. As a nation we patted Mr. Rhodes on the back, telling the Colonial Office to stand on one side and give him a free hand in order that he might perfect his work. The best characteristics of the nation are not exemplified in what we see to-day—those who prostrated themselves with the most servile adulation less than six months ago, now standing upon their hind-legs, virtuous and indignant over the plot that failed. But if it had succeeded the skies would have been rent with the plaudits of those who can now do nothing but howl! In truth, if Mr. Rhodes were here, and free to say what in his heart he must surely feel, he would admit that adulation of the fickle crowd has been the root cause of his undoing. For myself, I felt so strongly persuaded that he must come to grief directly he allowed his conduct in South Africa to be governed by the cheap popularity he had secured in England, that I separated myself from him some twelve months ago, after an intimate association in public endeavour for a period of nearly twenty years; but I turn to him irresistibly at a juncture such as this, for no man living is more capable than he of inspiring sympathy and affection, and I esteem this miscarriage,

attributable to others rather than himself—others whom he is too loyal to sacrifice in order to save his own skin—as of small account compared with the magnificent services he has rendered to South Africa and to the Empire at large.

Then, as regards the question why Mr. Rhodes was in such a hurry. Perhaps I am in as good a position as anybody to throw light upon that dark problem. When he was last in London, I availed myself of the privilege which old acquaintance gave me to rally him upon the score of his failure, and to claim that certain of my predictions had been duly fulfilled. The twitting was not taken altogether in good part. "You have no occasion to revile me," he said, "for you have as much to answer for as anybody." In answer to my prompt requests for an explanation, he reminded me of certain conversations that we had together when he was passing through Johannesburg after the Matabele war. He could not cease from wondering at the marvellous growth of the town, of which he himself had helped to lay the very foundations less than seven years before. I sought to persuade him that the place was even then in its infancy, that it would dominate the Transvaal before the end of the century, and the Transvaal would tower above the rest of South Africa. "And then, of course," was his frequent interjection, "you will fall into line." I said that I did not think we should fall into line if by that he meant any sacrifice of Republican institutions and any lowering of the independent flag. We wanted nothing but to purify the Government. Loyal as we were to England when and while within the limits of the Empire, we did not feel called upon to make it our business to extend those limits. We believed

that we had a better moral right than the Boers to say what the Government of the country should be; but we were ready to pay deference to their susceptibilities to the extent of maintaining the Republic intact. Mr. Rhodes professed to doubt the great future I had predicted for Johannesburg; but when he saw the rush that took place last year, when he began to perceive what the exploitation of deep levels would really mean, when he saw the interests of the Cape subjected to some new menace every day, and the aim of his life threatened with summary frustration, he came to the conclusion that I was not far wrong, and that the Transvaal would assume the dimensions of an intractable proposition if further time were lost in bringing it into line.

Discontent in Johannesburg had virtually grown to a head by the middle of 1894. My programme was to form Rifle Associations all over the country, to reinforce ourselves by manning some of the principal mines with white labour instead of black, and to settle men of the right stamp upon the farms which *Uitlanders* and foreign corporations held in such considerable numbers. We could get no assistance for that programme from any of the principal men who are now in Pretoria jail. They still believed that mere verbal fulminations against Mr. Kruger would bring about the result desired. A year sufficed to convince them they were wrong, and then it was that they began to perceive that the world would never deem them worthy to be free unless they were prepared to strike off their shackles with their own hands. Mr. Otto's taunt is also one of the things that have a lot to answer for. "If they want the franchise," roared this unyielding old burgher, "they will have to fight for it." When Mr. Rhodes perceived that the

storm was gathering, and would eventually burst whether he liked it or not, what more natural than that he should seek to guide the movement into channels which he believed to be beneficial to the *Uitlander*, advantageous to the Cape, and agreeable to the Empire at large?

I have heard it maintained that Mr. Rhodes had no genuine sympathy for the *Uitlanders*, and that his intervention was dictated by a mere spirit of cupidity and personal aggrandisement. I grant, and grant most readily, that redress of *Uitlander* grievances was by no means the moving force so far as he was concerned; but the fact that other motives were operating in the background does not exclude the idea that he was genuinely indignant at the treatment accorded by Mr. Kruger to those who contributed so much to the prosperity of the State. It is only necessary to know the guiding principles of the man. Those who do know them will bear me out when I say that he has always held in the highest esteem those whom he ranked as the producers of the earth, whether they be producers of gold or diamonds, coal or wool, wheat or wine. All other classes (except, perhaps, the military class) he has consistently regarded as the mere camp-followers of industry; but it has ever been his cardinal maxim that every "producer" should be duly invested with his legitimate share of political power. In so far, therefore, as he had any part in the plot that failed, it may be taken for granted that he was animated by the loftiest of aims in the sphere of Imperial policy, and by a simple appreciation of the fact that the non-producing Boer was treating the industrious miner as though he were a white Kaffir instead of a citizen equal with

himself. That there were in the inner circle of the conspiracy men with whom the thought of gain eventually became uppermost; that these men had engaged in market operations which would have involved them in heavy loss if prices had not broken at the end of the year; that they moved heaven and earth to push the movement forward when the responsible leaders in Johannesburg were loudly crying "Back"—these are facts that may or may not be unimpeachable; but it will require evidence of the most indisputable character to convince those who have known Mr. Rhodes, as I have, that his individual motives were soiled by prospective participation, direct or indirect, in such unholy gains.

Unless it be labouring this article unduly, I should like to add a brief expression of my views regarding the course that ought now to be pursued by Her Majesty's Government. The time has passed for doing what should have been done at the beginning of the year. It is probably not Mr. Chamberlain's fault that it was not done. He was most exigent that the High Commissioner, when at Pretoria, should press on Mr. Kruger an immediate redress of grievances; but the High Commissioner, in his wisdom, thought fit to return to Cape Town without complying with that command. Foiled in this manner, it would have been well if an Anglo-South African Commission had been sent to Pretoria, and an immediate display of force had been made at the Cape. That opportunity, however, was likewise lost. It only now remains to make it quite clear to her Majesty's subjects in South Africa that they are not to be abandoned—or farewell, an early farewell, to British sovereignty over any part of the country—and equally clear to Mr. Kruger and his supporters that any attempt

on their part to effect the union of South Africa under the Republican flag will be foredoomed to failure as complete as the failure of Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Rhodes. To the former end it is absolutely necessary that the arsenals at Cape Town and at Simons Town should be replenished with warlike stores to an extent which would enable the British partisans to hold their own in the event of necessity arising.

Fears that events of the utmost gravity are impending are naturally accentuated by the knowledge that the Boer Government is importing warlike stores from Germany and America to an unheard-of extent. Mr. Chamberlain can hardly be aware of the magnitude of these preparations, but inquiries in the proper quarter would doubtless cause his eyes to be opened by the aggregate of the tonnage taken up. The Boers, no doubt, argue that they must lay in abundant supplies in time of peace, inasmuch as they could get nothing from the sea in time of war; but measures of this hostile character fully warrant Her Majesty's Government in making that apprehension good. The events of the last few months must have opened the eyes, not only of the English, but of the Portuguese, to the precarious tenure by the latter of their possessions south of the Limpopo. If indications go for anything at all, these events mean that the Portuguese must be prepared at any time to face a descent of Boers from the high veldt and a landing of Germans from the sea. In view of these contingencies, with neither of which would the Portuguese Government be able to deal single-handed, good policy clearly dictates the closest possible alliance between England and her ancient ally. Portuguese sovereignty, now distinctly threatened, must be upheld at any cost, and none but

England can uphold it. England, therefore, should guarantee the inviolability of the Portuguese littoral against all comers, and Portugal, in return, should not only give England the right of passage for her troops, but should undertake that no similar right should be given to any other Power. Such an arrangement would effectually bring home to Boer and German their absolute impotence in the last resort.

At the moment of writing things appear to be in a state of deadlock. Everybody is waiting for somebody else to make the next move. Public opinion restrains the Imperial Government from accepting the resignations of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit until it is known that some advantage will ensue. The Pretoria Government is keeping the rank and file of its prisoners in jail as pawns to play off against the dismissal of its two most potent enemies; the leaders will languish until it is seen what steps will be taken as regards Jameson and his men. No concessions will be made to *Uitlanders* except in return for some substantial *quid pro quo* from England. The Boers will adhere to their policy of masterly inactivity, trusting to the chapter of accidents to befriend them in the future as in the past. They are inimitable at waiting. Mr. Chamberlain may be unable to render any material aid to his countrymen at this trying juncture; but he can at least refrain from adding to their discouragements; and no greater discouragement could be imagined, no greater triumph for the Boers than the dismissal of Mr. Rhodes. It is an egregious mistake to regard him as a spent force in South Africa. He is anything but that. The Republican party—those at least who are not satisfied with the maintenance of the *status quo*, but aim at the final expulsion of the British flag from South Africa—

could not possibly hate him more than they have hated him for years. It is true that recent events have forced many Afrikanders who formerly supported him into the arms of his opponents; but it is equally true that many Englishmen who have held aloof in the past, on the ground that Mr. Rhodes pandered too much to Dutch sentiment, have rallied round him during the past few months with an enthusiasm that admits of no mistake. It is literally the case, as a very high personage is reported to have said to a minister whose soul was made heavy by the consequences of one deplorable blunder, that Mr. Rhodes is not infallible, but we cannot do without him in South Africa—not yet.

BEFORE THE RAID

[December 1895]

WHAT'S IN THE WIND?

THE air financial has been thick for several weeks past with mysterious suggestions of impending trouble in the Transvaal, and there are not wanting some significant indications that the wave of expectation—apprehension would scarcely be the proper term—has extended to political circles as well. It is true that the South African question, in common with the Eastern question, has had no place in public interest for ten days past; but this quietude may be fairly ascribed to the superior claims of our little difficulty with Venezuela and the United States, and the eclipse may prove to be nothing more than temporary, and to that extent delusive and misleading. If the stories and forebodings which were lately current, to the serious detriment of all who have money at stake in South African ventures, could be dismissed as mere inventions of the "bear" interest on the Stock Exchange, there would be no necessity to sound the note of warning which I venture to think the circumstances demand. There is, however, too much reason to believe that serious projects are taking shape, out of which incalculable harm may eventuate if impolitic language and ill-conceived enterprises be not effectually discouraged at a juncture which may well prove, so far as South Africa is concerned, to be the parting of the ways. The presence at the Colonial Office of Mr. Chamberlain, coupled with the manifest disposition of

that Minister to leave a record of activity and usefulness behind him, has awakened in certain quarters an evident desire to force the pace in a region where "slow and sure" must be accepted as the only safe and unalterable guide.

In sounding this warning note we have to deal with something more than the "irresponsible chatter of hare-brained frivolity." The Earl of Selborne, Mr. Chamberlain's capable lieutenant in the House of Lords, gave an exposition of colonial policy at Hampstead the other evening, foreshadowing Australian and South African confederation as objects upon which his chief had set his heart. I have lived in South Africa more than twenty years; I have a vivid recollection of the crimes, and blunders worse than crimes, which caused that country to be deluged with innocent blood, and plunged into an agony that even yet endures, by the well-meant but ill-advised efforts of Lord Carnarvon and Sir Bartle Frere in the same direction, and I take it upon myself to solemnly adjure Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Selborne to beware, and to think twice, nay thrice, and yet many times again, before they cross the threshold of that undertaking so far as South Africa is concerned. It may be that the question is not yet officially recognised as being within the range of practical politics; but some of the signs and portents in the air must serve to convince any experienced observer that there is a danger, a real danger, lest the Unionist and Imperialistic sympathies which are now in the ascendant should be exploited by those who have less worthy objects than Mr. Chamberlain in view. That the union of all civilised South Africa in one autonomous whole,

forming a political and administrative entity as compact as the Transatlantic Dominion itself, is desirable who can deny? I speak as one who realises to the full how much the progress of the country has been retarded by its lack of internal cohesiveness; how provocative of conflict is the absence of any federal tie to-day; and yet, paradoxical as it may seem, I cannot but think that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Selborne will, in the end, prove themselves the worst enemies of South African unity rather than its promoters, if they should move hand or foot to advance that desideratum by a single hour.

It is in vain to appeal to the precedent of the Dominion. Doubtless it is true that Canada would have remained a congeries of discordant fragments until now if an Imperial Secretary of State had not set before himself the task of uniting them into one harmonious whole: but in Canada you had, and happily in Australia you have now, the one dominating antecedent condition which in South Africa is unfortunately wanting—that country is not all under the British flag. Moreover, in Australia you have the homogeneity of the people to aid you, while in South Africa there are English, Afrikanders, Hollanders, and Germans—to say nothing of Kaffirs and Indians—all pulling different ways and irreconcilably opposed.

The story used to be told in the Cape that when Sir Bartle Frere disclosed his policy to that veteran official, Sir Richard Southey, the latter did not appear to be very much enamoured of the prospect unfolded to his view. It was, in truth, a very naked policy, though draped for the nonce in decorous and even attractive wrappings. Lord Carnarvon desired to bring

about confederation; he was led to believe that colonial dislike and Boer abhorrence of British policy towards the natives was the principal obstacle in the way; wherefore it was to be made apparent to all and sundry that the little finger of the Englishman was thicker for the natives than the Dutchman's loins, and the Afrikander heart was in that way to be won. "If your Excellency has 20,000 soldiers at your back," the plain-spoken survivor of the Crown Colony Administration is reported to have said, "twenty millions of money at command, and twenty years in which to accomplish your object, you will probably succeed in effecting the union of South Africa; but if you have only 19,999 men, £19,999,999 in money, and a single day less than twenty years for your undertaking, I would not advise you to attempt it." Poor Sir Bartle did attempt it, with results which the lapse of years has not even yet enabled us to efface from our memories. Of course, South Africa of 1895 is not the South Africa of 1875. For one thing the native difficulty, which had been for long years the bane and bugbear of Boer and British statesmanship alike, may be regarded for all practical purposes as now eliminated; and yet the task of cementing the uncemented fractions of which South Africa consists is probably not less formidable to-day than it was at any time before.

There are some, however, who cherish the belief that the immediate future will witness the consummation of the plan that Lord Carnarvon and his High Commissioner strove to consummate in vain. When that expectation comes to be analysed it will generally be found that the wish is father to the thought. Opinion, in so far as there is any worth the name, seems to rest upon assumptions which are notoriously not founded upon any

substratum of fact. It is assumed, for example, that there is a considerable body of reasoned conviction in South Africa itself that federal union is desirable and necessary for the general good. Unfortunately, no such reasoned conviction on the part of the great majority of the people exists. Confederation is the pious opinion of a few politicians and a handful of journalists, nothing more. The name of it evokes no popular enthusiasm. On the contrary, the idea is redolent of bitter memories, and the subject when mentioned is almost universally dismissed as something that may or may not come in the dim and distant future, but something with which the present generation has assuredly no practical concern.

If the rumours now current have arisen in part from Mr. Chamberlain's well-known proclivities, they must be attributed in some degree to the anomalous situation that now obtains in the Transvaal. The conclusion appears to have been very generally reached that the strain in that country has come pretty near to breaking point. I take leave to doubt it. I am no friend or upholder of the Transvaal Government. On the contrary, I have waged almost incessant war upon it by voice and pen for seven weary years. I believe it to be one of the very worst Governments, calling itself civilised, republican, and Christian, now existing upon earth—so bad indeed that it must come down ere long through the weight of its own iniquities. There is but one circumstance that can possibly prevent its fall, and that circumstance is interference from the Cape, or deliberate avowal by the Imperial Government of what we have now represented as its cherished aims. There are Boers and Boers, and it must not for a moment be supposed that the misgovernment of the rude oligarchs who are grouped around

President Kruger at Pretoria commands the undivided support and approval of the burghers on their farms. The situation is very much as it was in England before the recent general election. Until the fateful day came round, Lord Rosebery and his colleagues could speak for the nation, and none could say them nay, but the ballot-box revealed that their title so to do had vanished long before. Unfortunately, there is not in the constitutional machinery of the South African Republic anything to correspond with an English general election. An appeal to the people, attended by results before which all men must bow, has been rendered wholly impossible, although it was not absent from the intentions of the founders of the Republic when they framed their Grondwet. Changes in the composition of the Volksraad are gradual, and the delay in giving effect to public opinion is almost as great, though not quite, as the law's delays in our own incomparable island. At the present moment the Administration is undoubtedly representative of nothing more than a minority of a minority, and the day cannot be long distant when Boer opinion of the better sort will be able to assert itself in the form of legislative amelioration and administrative change. All those who believe with me that this happy issue out of all the *Uitlanders'* afflictions is near at hand must view with unfeigned alarm and regret every suggestion, however veiled, that a policy of interference, whether direct or through the instrumentality of the Cape or any other agency, should be adopted and avowed by Her Majesty's Government. Such an avowal, while it might easily fail to substantially ameliorate the *Uitlanders'* unhappy lot, would have the undoubted effect of detaching from the cause of political equality some of its most ardent champions, while

strengthening, on the other hand, President Kruger and his adherents in the foolish determination to persevere in their reactionary policy to the very end.

I do not wish to be misunderstood in this connection. There is one contingency in which Her Majesty's Government ought to interfere—promptly and to no uncertain end. On more than one occasion during the past two years peaceful agitation in Johannesburg has evoked threats, unrebuked of authority, that such seditious vapourings should be effectually "damped" by the letting loose of a few thousand Boers upon the devoted town and the adjacent mines, in which many millions of European capital are embarked. We are in a vicious circle in this matter. So long as the *Uitlanders* remain unarmed they will get nothing from President Kruger which that autocrat, falsely calling himself Republican, can safely refuse to give, and they must be dependent in the last resort upon the Suzerain Power; but if Johannesburg were already armed—armed it is so far as ample moral justification for revolt is concerned, but not with the only weapons which the present rulers of the country hold in high respect—there would be no occasion to contemplate, even as a remote possibility, the firing of a single shot. Rifles, however, cannot be obtained without violation of the law of the land. While the burgher and the Hollander are supplied, at the expense of the mining industry, with rifles of the very latest pattern, with ammunition free, gratis and for nothing to almost any extent, the miner himself may not possess a gun of any sort without leave and license from the powers that be, and no ordinary difficulties have to be surmounted before he can obtain a permit even for 100 cartridges for the purpose of ordinary sport.

In circumstances such as these, it must be admitted, even by those by whom interference of any sort is most strenuously deprecated, that Her Majesty's Government would have not only a right, but a duty, to take the matter into its own hands if the demands of the *Uitlander* for good government and political equality should prompt the wilder Boers to seek to extinguish the fires of discontent, working their wicked will upon British property and defenceless British subjects, by the only means which they seem either able or willing to employ. More than eighteen months ago the time was palpably ripe for trying conclusions with the oppressor, and Mr. Kruger would have been overthrown, there and then, upon the simple issue that the limits of forbearance had been reached when men of alien nationality, men who were denied the most elementary rights of citizenship though their allegiance was tendered, were pressed into military service in wars which they disapproved; but arms were not ready to the hands of those who were able and willing to wield them in defence of their palpable and elementary rights, and what could not be cured had for the moment to be endured. Her Majesty's Government, it is true, stepped in at that time to arrest the tyranny of Mr. Kruger's Government, and there was no help for it but that such intervention, humiliating and enfeebling though it were, should be hailed with at least the semblance of joy; but the consequences were indubitably evil all the same, inasmuch as we were taught to rely upon extraneous aid when it would have been better if we had been left to work out our own salvation. The Boers of the Kruger faction were once more knitted together; and the Government found its day of reckoning postponed.

A determination to intervene in certain events could, perhaps, hardly be regarded as a policy, and a policy for South Africa every British Government is, no doubt, expected to propound. Sterile and unsatisfactory as it may appear to some who wish to leave their footprints on the sands of time, I make bold to declare it as the deliberate conviction of those who know South Africa best, who are now removed from the scene of its petty feuds and bickerings, and who believe most fervently (as I do) in maintaining the integrity of the Empire as we find it, that the best of all policies for that country is for Downing Street to do that which is right as circumstances arise and then to leave things to shape their own course in obedience to the power and the influence which may prove supreme upon the spot. The results may haply be disappointing. The two Republics may not be brought back into the Imperial fold. Mr. Rhodes, the unresting statesman, may not be able to add to his laurels the crowning glory of undoing the bad work of Sir George Colley, the ill-fated soldier; but it is better thus than that the resources of even this great Empire should be pledged to the futile task of endeavouring to set back the hand of time. If Lord Aberdeen had not relinquished the Orange River sovereignty in 1854, if Mr. Gladstone had not succeeded in 1881 in persuading his countrymen that the richest country in the universe was "valueless," the destiny of South Africa might, perhaps, have been different; but in my humble opinion it would be just as vain to seek to bring back the United States under the folds of the Royal Standard as to put forth any effort to subdue and reconcile the spirit of freedom and independence which has now taken such deep root in the congenial soil of South Africa. The Boer, of course, would fight

to the death; and he is infinitely better armed for the fray than he was in 1880, when he was poor, ill-fed, and insufficiently equipped. And let not the delusion be entertained in England, declare it who will, that the Afrikander and the *Uitlander* in the Transvaal are hungering and thirsting for sight of the Union Jack. They chafe under the rule of President Kruger, it is true; they look forward with burning impatience to the time when they will be able to overthrow Mr. Kruger and all his works; but it is not in order that they may substitute Mr. Chamberlain, much as that statesman is admired for the magnificent courage and commanding ability he has displayed in the arena of politics at home. Their ambition is to set up a purified and progressive republic in the place of the rotten and effete monstrosity that now has the temerity to flaunt all its sins of omission and commission in face of the civilised world. Such a republic would not be hostile to Great Britain or to the British South African colonies; it might, and probably would, absorb the Orange Free State; but it would be content that its neighbours should work out their own destiny, just as the United States are content that Canada, on the one hand, and Mexico, on the other, should pursue their several and separate ways.

The moral of it all is obvious. By every true Briton it should be deemed the one unpardonable sin for a statesman to desert those whom he has sworn to cling to and protect. Slow, indeed, should our rulers be to strike the national flag on any isle or seeming desert place where once it has flown, for inexorable fate seems to have decreed that, once hauled down by the hands that ought to shield it, not even the banner of liberty can ere be raised again. Mr. Chamberlain was *particeps criminis* in the

abandonment of the Transvaal even before military honour was satisfied; he has done not a little to redeem that stupendous error by subsequent devotion to the integrity of the Empire so far as these islands are concerned; but he will not really retrieve the past or enhance his reputation for wisdom, but rather find a grave for it in the land which is proverbially the tomb for statesmen's and soldiers' fame, by embarking upon the course towards which he is now being apparently impelled.

PREPARING FOR THE PLUNGE

[July 1895]

MISUNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

. . . I COULD not pass through Cape Town without paying my respects to Cecil Rhodes. I have gone my way and he has gone his; but the force of old association is so strong that I find it far from easy to adapt oneself to the position of having neither part nor lot in public affairs. I found him in the modest little office in Grave Street which is all the accommodation the Colony seems able to provide for its notable Prime Minister. The hand of time is not dealing altogether lightly with our friend. He clearly has a better grip of himself than he has had for some time past, but he looks six years rather than six months older than when I saw him last. He has fallen away in flesh, and there is a far-away appearance in his aspect as though he had some special burden on his mind, and I could not help associating his air of pre-occupation with the conversation we had earlier in the year at the Burlington. In other words, the plot is plainly thickening.

He opened the ball by rallying me with the fact that he was still in office. I replied that the year was still young, and that I never expected him to attempt any special wickedness so long as the Liberals were in power. What would happen, however, with him at this end and Mr. Chamberlain at the other, time alone could tell. The change of Government would certainly give a new turn to things in the

Transvaal. The Boers had for some time past had their eye upon him, and now they would be very much upon their guard against Mr. Chamberlain. The Rand was, however, so prosperous that grievances against the Government were all forgotten, and nobody would be thanked for reviving them.

Without offering any remark upon these observations, our friend asked what I was now engaged upon, what part I proposed to play in the future, how one who had had every moment of his life engrossed in active work and public affairs could allow himself, while still in the prime of life, to sink into the position of a tame cat? There was work to be done at Johannesburg, real and important work, work that I should revel in, and I ought to go back to my old position to undertake it.

"Not unless we have a clear understanding," was my reply, "that we are to be allowed to settle our affairs amongst ourselves. I am all for tackling Mr. Kruger; but I am not for tackling the Transvaal. We nearly got rid of him at the last election. We *should* have got rid of him if your particular friends had not run with the hare and hunted with the hounds. They supplied money impartially to all three candidates, so that they would have friends at court no matter what befell. The Progressives have had a set-back in consequence of the hectoring manner in which Loch went about his intervention over the commandeering business, and made it known what he would do if there were but three thousand rifles in Johannesburg. The Boers do not fail to make a note of these things; but there is a strong Progressive party in the Raad, and if we go the right way about the business, some man of liberal tendencies will become President at the next election.

Then we shall get all that is necessary in the way of reforms."

"But I don't want your reforms, or rather your reformed Republic," was his quick response. "The ideal system is that of a British colony. Our people are already in the majority, and what is good enough for us is good enough for them."

"Yes, I dare say they would be happier as a colony than they are as a republic; but they think otherwise. I don't think they are to be persuaded, and they are certainly not to be forced."

"But you surely don't mean that things should be allowed to go on for ever as they have been going on of late?"

"I perceive nothing intolerable in the situation. Things are not as we should like them to be; but that is the fault of the Imperial Government for making such idiotic conventions. As for this National Union movement, I would never have anything to do with it. None of its members have any honest desire to cease to be British subjects, therefore they cannot have an honest desire to be Transvaal burghers, and they cannot possibly be both. I wonder you are not afraid of being impeached for encouraging endeavours to detach from their natural allegiance some of the most valuable subjects of the Queen!"

"Yes, I appreciate that difficulty. I also do not like the idea of British subjects becoming burghers, and that is why I prefer that burghers should become British subjects. I really am very much interested in the case of the *Uitlanders*."

"Believe me, my dear Rhodes, it would be better to leave Boer Tories and Boer Progressives to fight it out

amongst themselves. We are too near the big events of 1881, too near your seizure of the interior, too near the rush to the Rand, for the Boers to be amenable to external influences. Besides, we *Uitlanders* who give any serious attention to public affairs do not understand this intense interest on the part of our dear friends at the Cape. Your sympathy would be much more practical if you were to stop robbing us in the shape of excessive transit dues and railway charges. These you impose on us in order that your own diamonds and brandy may go scot free."

"How can you talk of our railway charges in face of the tariffs of the Netherlands Company?"

"How, indeed! The Netherlands sweat us over forty miles; you are exorbitant over more than fifteen hundred. Besides, we have to thank our dear friends at the Cape for there being any Netherlands Railway in existence—not you personally, it is true, for you were in favour of the Kimberley-Pretoria line when Lewis and Marks went down on their knees and begged Sprigg and Upington to help Kruger in making it. If it had been made, there would have been no Delagoa line and Kruger would never have gone to the Continent for the assistance he could get neither in the Cape nor in England."

"I am glad, at any rate, that you acquit me of all blame for the present situation."

"Pardon me; but I don't acquit you. In a way you are as much to blame as any one, if only for the reason that, instead of encouraging the Boers to trek, in accordance with their instincts, on the advance of a civilisation that has no charms for them, you are the one man who has been most industriously engaged for

the past ten years in heading them off and drawing a ring fence about them. A rat in a hole will fight you, though he would probably much prefer to get out of your way. If we have now to deal with twice as many Boers in the Transvaal as there need have been, that is your fault. Where one has gone over the Limpopo to occupy a farm in Rhodesia, ten would have gone if it had been Krugeria. If we have no votes, no rights to bear arms, no claims to the equal recognition of our language, that is because the Imperial Government in 1881, and again in 1884, was either not courageous enough or not intelligent and far-seeing enough to insist upon the provisions by which these ends would have been secured. Under the circumstances, and in view of all that has happened since, we cannot complain that the Boers should take advantage of our default. The situation has given them something to bargain with, and what Dutchman alive could hold out against that temptation? Perhaps in like case we should do the same. If we ask them nicely, and give them an adequate *quid pro quo*, we shall probably find that they are not unwilling to supply our omissions; but if we bounce and bully—as Englishmen can, you know, when they are dealing with weaker peoples—and if we try to read into Conventions things that are plainly not there, we shall lose the aid of the well-disposed amongst the Dutchmen, Afrikanders and Boers alike, and there will be a shindy compared with which that of 1881 was a musical performance."

"Bless me, you have become strangely tender to your friend, Mr. Kruger. I don't remember that you were quite so tender when you were personally living under his rule."

"That again is a mistake. Nothing would afford me as an *Uitlander* greater pleasure than to kick Mr. Kruger from Viljoens Drift to Zoutpansberg; but it is a domestic difference. *You* must not kick him. Every suggestion that you will only makes it impossible for his own friends to do it, of course for his own good. In so far as he is merely seeking to uphold the Republic, I don't think Mr. Kruger ought to be assaulted. He would be false to his oath if he threw open the portals of the State to the hordes of Polish Jews who have lately swarmed over his borders. Their votes would be a marketable commodity in the hands of the "bosses" of illicit trade. Equally culpable would he be if he lightly admitted to the franchise men who openly declare that their oaths would not be binding upon them in the only event in which their allegiance would be likely to be tested."

"Well, I think we must give up all hope of being able to count upon your assistance; but when you have been a few weeks in Johannesburg you will probably take a different view of things. You will find Jameson there, prospecting. Talk matters over with him. I should like to have your co-operation, and to have it whole-hearted, because I know what it means. In any case . . ."

Thus ended a conversation which was not calculated to make me any easier in my mind with respect to the way in which things are shaping. I have seen Jameson, and had a lengthy *indaba* with him at the Rand Club. He produced a letter from Rhodes couched in such flattering terms with reference to our recent interview that I could only conclude that it had been so written for the express purpose of being shown to me. The time, however, has passed when I would surrender the right of private judg-

ment even to Cecil Rhodes, and these schemes are fraught with such momentous issues that any man who paltered with his conscience in regard to them would richly merit whatever may be the fate reserved in this present year of grace for traitors to their country and their Queen.

Jameson was even less convincing than Rhodes. He seems to have derived his ideas about the facility with which the position could be carried mainly from that unspeakable idiot, —— ——, whose eternal malevolence I drew down upon myself, five years ago, by a private admonition to the effect that if he did not drop his secret society nonsense, I would either show him up in the *Star* or lodge an information with the police. Jameson appears to think the place is "seething with rebellion," and "ripe for anything." Boer fighting qualities are "the biggest bubble of the century." They are less to be dreaded than even those of Lo Bengula! Prick the bubble once and it's all over!

I tried hard to persuade the dear doctor that he had made a wrong diagnosis. There was discontent, to be sure, but not discontent of the kind or degree that would induce prosperous men to take their lives in their hands and engage in mortal combat with their oppressors. It was ridiculous to dream of a revolution while a "boom" was in full swing and every man an actual or potential millionaire. The only possible occasion for a popular movement against the Government was some time or other when the gamblers were all ruined, and the industrious men were tramping the streets after being thrown out of work.

Jameson thought I took a wrong view of human nature, at least of Johannesburg nature. It was just when people had their pockets full that they had a good

conceit of themselves, and would stand no blank nonsense from these dirty Boers! All that they wanted was someone to show them the way, and he was ready to take the risks of that!

"My dear doctor," was my somewhat saddened reply, "you will not have been here three months before you have learned to change your opinion. I know my Johannesburg. I love it. But I recognise the difference between Johannesburg froth and Johannesburg solid brew."

"Well, I shall not be here three months in which to discover that distinction. I think you are wrong, as events will show; but I must get back to my work in the North, and prepare for action when the time is ripe. Probably you will have your out-of-works and your ruined gamblers by the end of the year."

"That seems to me to be more than doubtful. The chance is not good enough to warrant the trouble and expense of all the preparations that I can see you fellows are bent upon. I inferred from what I had heard in other quarters that you had come here to take up the position of Resident Director of the Consolidated Gold-Fields Company. I rather hailed that appointment. If it had been the case, you would have been able gradually to acquire an exact knowledge of the situation, and to gauge the depth and character of public feeling. Yours is a name to conjure with. You could do more, if you were to cast in your lot with this community, than any man I know; and if that were your rôle, I think I should be disposed to respond to the appeal that was made to me at Cape Town, and to work alongside of you for the purpose of wresting from this stubborn old mule at Pretoria a sufficient measure of reform. Reform, however, is not what you are after. Another general upheaval in

South Africa is not what I am after: so you must permit me to say that I think your project will prove a fiasco. You underrate the patriotism of the Boer, and you overrate the discontent of the *Uitlander*. Revolutions are not effected by the kind of men you have taken into your counsels. To some of them the thing is nothing more than a lark; others may think it possible to wring something out of Pretoria by mere bluff; and others again may imagine they are serious until it comes to the pinch, when they will discover that they are not. You and I know lots of men who will not fight to order, but will fight like demons when they think they will. I don't think Johannesburg thinks it will at the present time. So my advice to you is to leave it alone, as I intend to do myself, and as I think our friend Rhodes will when he comes to learn the real state of the case, unless his infatuation should have taken greater hold of him than as yet I am willing to believe."

With that I came to the conclusion that there was no sufficient reason for me to remain in Johannesburg, and so I return to England by the very next mail.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

[January 1895]

FAITHFUL THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND

. . . You are quite entitled to ask why I am removing myself from a sphere of labour that has been so congenial to me for nearly twenty years. The answer is that it has ceased to be congenial, and when one can no longer fulfil his duties with satisfaction to himself, the sooner he lays them down the better for all concerned. You are well aware how and why I came into this particular connection. I have remained in it longer than I need have done, perhaps longer even than I should have done, and the sole object I have had in view has been the desire to promote the public ends which Cecil Rhodes and I have long held in common. I have had occasion to discover during the past few weeks, however, that he has ceased to be the Cecil Rhodes that he used to be; that he has come under the influence of new men and an altogether new set of ideas; and since I prefer the old associations and the old aims, and plainly see that his present advisers know precious little about South Africa and care less, I thought it better to part before anything like serious conflict had developed than to wait until, perhaps, it was no longer possible to say good-bye and yet continue friends.

You will, of course, be curious to learn the points of difference. They cannot be indicated in a word, and the whole story would be too long to tell you. Suffice it to say that the mental attitude of our friend towards men and things is entirely changed. He has fretted for some

time past under continual reminders, in the press and in Parliament, that he is but a tool in the hands of Hofmeyr, and now he is resolved upon doing something that everybody shall recognise as coming off his own bat.

Over here, of course, they know nothing of our domestic details. He is not only the lion of the season when he comes over, the popular hero whom all sorts and conditions of men and women delight to honour, but serious men of affairs really believe that he carries all South Africa in his pocket, and that he is the visible embodiment of all that is high-minded, sagacious and profound. What is worse, they have plainly succeeded in making their hero himself a convert to their views. As yet, I suppose, he does not imagine that he put the gold and diamonds whence they are unearthed, or that South Africa did not exist for the rest of the universe until he discovered it; but it is coming to that, and I have no desire to be in the neighbourhood when these unhappy delusions begin to bear their inevitable fruit. It is not alone that egregious person, Mr. Stead, who is responsible for this stupid exaltation. Others who know their man better than Mr. Stead, who must know in their hearts (if they have any) that they are no friends of his who grovel upon their bellies before him, seem to rejoice in a state of prostration that is positively sickening to behold. We have breathed the air of freedom and equality too long in South Africa to thrive in an atmosphere that reeks of toadyism as though it were the outfall of a main sewer.

Our friend, in fact, has become the slave of his new environment. He is peremptory where he used to be open to reason, impatient where he was formerly content to accommodate his pace to that of the most halting and

hesitating old Boer, and he has clearly become possessed of the idea that, if there are conceivably some whom money cannot "square," there are none who are able to withstand its might when brought to bear upon them by a genius such as his. His present conception seems to be that the British public exists to find him money, and he exists to do things for them that no molly-coddling Government can be induced to do. His manner, from being that of a prince of good fellows, with a personal charm about him that few could resist, has become most comically regal. A good story is going the rounds about his visit to the Queen. Her Majesty asked what he had been doing since last she had the pleasure of receiving him. "Madame," was the pat reply, "I have been adding new provinces to your Majesty's already wide dominions." "Ah!" was the flattering rejoinder, "so different from some other statesmen, who think they serve me by seeking to detach provinces from my dominions!"

True or false, there is an unmistakable suggestion in this kind of story that bodes no good for the peace of South Africa, and I am afraid that popular adulation, combined with the countenance of the Court and society, may prompt him to attempt a task which no serious, politically minded person would ever suggest or approve. You have only to scratch this darling of the Bond and you will find a rampant Jingo underneath. I do not mean to imply that his professed Liberalism serves as a cloak for illiberal designs; but I think he possesses, in common with the greatest of Liberals, the faculty of persuading himself that any course on which he may be bent is in strict accord with the true faith; but if not, then all the worse for the faith. You know how utterly I abhor the tendencies of Mr. Kruger's

Government; but I take it to be, not an enduring system, but something that is personal to the man, something that will not last beyond his time.

It is quite right, of course, that the *Uitlanders* should leave no doubt in the minds of the Boers as to their thorough detestation of Krugerism, but it would be quite wrong for the friends of the *Uitlanders* to take such a course as would make every Dutchman believe that Krugerism and Afrikanderism are the same thing. There are many Dutchmen—to whom, of course, England is not and never can be "home"—in whose minds, all unconsciously to them, a most interesting struggle between the nationalistic sentiment and devotion to the Empire is still in progress. It is not nearly so acute, I hardly need say, as it was fifteen or twenty years ago, but it still goes on. I am not afraid of Mr. Kruger winning them over. Give him rope and give us time, and the end will be a purged and purified Republic and a colonial Dutch population as steadfast in their loyalty as the English colonists themselves. As I say, I am not afraid of Mr. Kruger winning them over; but I am afraid that some rash act on our part may drive them into his arms. Such an act would, no doubt, be conceived with the very best intentions; but the road to hell is paved as it has ever been.

Rightly understood and rightly handled, there is no present danger, probably no ultimate danger, in the existence and steady growth of the nationalistic sentiment. Imperial sentiment can grow side by side, and the task of our statesmen should be, not to extirpate Afrikanderism, for that they cannot do, but to reconcile it with a sufficient degree of loyalty to the Empire. If we expect too much, we may lose all. If we are

content with little, we may eventually succeed in gaining the whole. At the present time I believe the public opinion of the colony, and probably of the Free State also, would heartily approve any effort on the part of the *Uitlanders* to compel Mr. Kruger to govern them with more justice. Free Staters and Cape Dutch alike, to say nothing of the Progressives in the Transvaal itself, are seriously alarmed at the recent disposition of Mr. Kruger and his advisers to make it appear that other European Powers have an interest in South Africa not inferior to that of England herself; and yet we have to stop short of Imperial dictation, and we must keep Mr. Rhodes from putting his finger in the pie, or the Dutchmen will be banded together virtually as one man, and we shall have the whole country in a blaze.

Rhodes, however, who seems to think far more of giving Kruger a fall than of dealing with these difficulties in the manner of a prudent statesman, will listen to none of this, and he seems to be under the impression that there is an urgency in the matter which I am quite unable to comprehend. It is not the position out there, but the state of parties here, that is holding him back. Whether he thinks his own time is short, or has had it conveyed to him that a South African Confederation would be an acceptable addition to the glories of the present reign, I must confess myself unable to divine; but the ostensible reason for his great show of interest and activity is that Krugerism is a growing force that cannot be dealt with internally, and must be crushed by external agencies, or it will become dangerous to ourselves. I, on the other hand, regard it as a declining force that nothing can revivify,

or at any rate an ephemeral phenomenon that nothing can make permanent, except interference from without.

I had a serious and at the same time curious conversation upon this subject with our friend on the day upon which I came to the conclusion that there was no longer any place for me amongst his coadjutors and supporters. I took the liberty of an old associate to tell him that I did not like his new ideas nor his new men. He replied that I was too cautious, too slow, and too squeamish. Everybody was too squeamish unless it were the doctors! Their trade made them more indifferent than other people to the shedding of blood! With a little bloodletting everything could be accomplished, and nothing of consequence without. We were going to see great changes before long. England was sick of Radical administration. The Tories would be in power within six months, and then there would be an opportunity for putting things right in South Africa, and not in South Africa alone, but all over the African continent. The present men, with one or two exceptions, were dead to all sense of Imperial responsibilities.

"Or alive," I suggested, "to the danger of being choked if they should bite off more than they could chew." I doubted very much, I continued, whether the constituencies were going to turn out even an Administration they were sick of in order to bring in men who could offer them nothing better than the luxury of a series of African wars—north, south, east and west. He had only to whisper such a suggestion, and he would have all the newspapers of the country, irrespective of party, down upon him like a cartload of bricks.

The answer to this deliverance was a bit of a revelation. "Thank God," he cried out with savage emphasis,

"I have now arrived at a position in which I don't care a continental fig"—you know the kind of fig I mean—"what any newspaper says for me or against me;" and apparently he found so much relief in this declaration that he must needs thrust his face into mine—you know his way—and deliberately repeat it in order to make it quite clear, I suppose, that he particularly did not care a fig what might be said of him by any newspaper that was under *my* control, and there are now, you know, half-a-dozen of them.

It occurred to me that language of that character was scarcely an appropriate acknowledgment of fifteen years' intimate and loyal association; but not content with spurning my advice, which of course he had a perfect right to do, my dear friend must needs trespass upon my poor prerogatives as responsible head of the venture in which we were jointly concerned, and this I could not possibly allow. His demand was that I should displace one of my most valued colleagues in order to make room for that glib but hysterical personage, Mr. Edmund Garrett, who rose to fame as one of Mr. Stead's young men. While admitting, as none could deny, the gentleman's capacity to furnish reams of bright and picturesque "copy," which a judicious editor would use or otherwise according to his discretion, I ventured to think that a man with a weak chest and strong convictions, particularly when they did not accord with my own, would not make an ideal editor for any one of our publications. Many stripes had I already endured for the blazing indiscretions of young men with a mission—to say nothing, of course, of my own shortcomings—and I was desirous rather to curtail these incidents than to add to their number in the future. South Africa was a country in

which the endeavour to run a live journal must be beset with peculiar difficulties for a long time to come, and (to put the matter plainly) I should as soon think of going into a powder magazine with a lighted torch in my hand as install one of Mr. Stead's young men in a responsible position either in Cape Town or in Johannesburg. I had the highest respect for Mr. Garrett's character and talents, and if either of my colleagues was prepared to welcome him as an assistant, that arrangement I should be very glad to enter into; but to appoint him to a responsible position, when my responsibility had to cover his, would be an error that my experience rendered me incapable of committing. I had a presentiment that no good would come of such an appointment, but it might result in incalculable harm. In short, I would neither displace the colleague whose seat was desired for Mr. Garrett nor one whose independence had given umbrage to a Rhodesian greater even (in his own estimation) than Mr. Rhodes himself. Myself, however, I might displace.[1]

As I drove to the city, I could not get out of my head that memorable passage in the letter I mentioned to you which our friend S—— wrote me from Newstead Abbey, wherein he asked in the bitterness of his soul whether he had come into the world for the sole purpose of glorifying one man, and that a man who would profit by the labours of his hand and the efforts of his brain, but would not stand by him when his hour of undeserved tribulation came. Hence the

[1] Mr. Garrett subsequently became editor of the *Cape Times*, and was eminently successful in persuading himself, and doubtless some others, that Mr. Kruger was the Sick Man of South Africa, whom nothing could restore, and Mr. Rhodes the Strong Man, whom none could resist. It is difficult to determine the precise extent to which this distinguished journalist contributed to the great upheaval; but he did his best.

cable severing all these ties. It was a bitter wrench; but I am content that you should judge me by the result—not now; but say in five years' time.

My parting shot at our friend was an offer, in perfect good-humour, to bet him a considerable wager on each of four events: that within twelve months he would cease to be Prime Minister of the Colony; that Jan Hofmeyr, whom he thinks he has with him, body and soul, will find him out and eject him; that he would cease to control the Consolidated Gold-Fields; and that he would bring the Chartered Company to grief. He asked, in no humour corresponding to my own, whether I left him nothing, to which I replied that I left him De Beers. "That," he said, "is very kind of you; but pray why do you leave me De Beers?" "Because," I replied, "there are men on that Board who love you well enough to distrust you. They already hold you by a leg, and if necessity arises they will shackle you by an arm as well."

It was distressing thus to irritate and vex one whose personal kindness has always been beyond measure; but some day, when he has shaken off this sycophantic crowd, when he lives again for the country and no longer imagines that the country exists for him, he will realise that it was out of an honest desire to save him from himself and give him pause that I did this thing. Faithful are the wounds of a friend!

"THE INTERIOR IS ALL RIGHT"

[October 1884]

THE BOERS AND BECHUANALAND

We have just passed through a crisis so acute that it very nearly landed this unfortunate country once again in war, if indeed all danger of that supreme calamity can even now be said to have wholly passed away. The cause of the trouble has to be sought in the one perennial source of all our difficulties and disturbances out here, the inability of the Imperial Government to know its own mind.

For some years past, ever since the ink was dry upon the Convention of Pretoria in point of fact, the Boers have made it all too clear that they had no intention of observing any boundaries whatsoever that might be imposed upon them, unless there happened to be upon the other side a power capable of resisting their advance. I confess to some sneaking sympathy for their disposition in this regard. The same impulse that prompted the early American settlers to go west moves the Boer to extend his borders in every possible direction, and since it is the inevitable destiny of the country, within at least the whole region that white men can occupy, to pass under white man's rule, the obvious conclusion is that the sooner the process is begun and ended the better. It ought not to be prevented; it should be controlled.

When, however, the Boers move in obedience to an irresistible instinct, it is one thing; when they move without even plausible necessity, and for the evident

purpose of causing trouble and annoyance to the paramount power—I will not say for the purpose of rendering the paramountcy nugatory—it becomes a horse of a totally different colour.

There was no pretence of necessity in the case now in question; it is not even seriously contended that the movement was spontaneous on the part of those who engaged in it; it resulted from a determination on the part of the ruling spirits at Pretoria, not only to disregard the boundaries they had covenanted to observe, but to bar the advance of British sovereignty or influence beyond the line of the Orange River and the Vaal. Although they were plainly told in 1881, and again in the present year, that the Sand River Convention could not possibly be revived, they had evidently not abandoned the determination that to all intents and purposes it should be.

British authority thus restricted, their own expansion followed as a matter of course. Failing that expansion, their desire has clearly been to introduce a new element into the country that should serve in some degree as a counterpoise to British authority. If that purpose could be honestly referred to the first law of nature, which sanctions a great deal, one could view the outward and visible signs of its existence without any special degree of irritation, but the Imperial Government has been conciliatory in its attitude towards these Boers, ever since Majuba at any rate, to the very last degree. Downing Street, indeed, was practically indifferent to the westward set of the Pretorian tide. It was not moved even by Bismarck's determination to plant a German colony north of the Orange River unless we fulfilled our tacit obliga-

tions in that country by affording protection to German traders and missionaries already established there; and I can well imagine the disgust with which it was finally kicked, by one troublesome individual and another, into the declaration of a British protectorate over the tribes of Bechuanaland whose borders march with those of the Transvaal.

That declaration came only just in time. If it had been much longer delayed, we might have seen the Boers and the Germans joining hands across the Kalahari, and it requires no great stretch of imagination, in these days of steam and big movements of population, to picture the Boers absorbed by their new allies and a great German colony, stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (for the Portuguese, of course, could offer no effective resistance) barring our way for ever to the Land of Promise and the El Dorados in the north.

I was in favour of a Protectorate being established when it was only a question of protecting the wretched natives, who are many degrees removed from the condition of bloodthirsty savages, from the assaults of piratical Boers; but when it became clear that something far more than this was in issue, mild acquiescence was speedily transformed into clamorous demand. It is not less necessary to the peace of the country that the Boer should understand that he has to keep faith with us than it is that we should keep faith with him. When the Imperial Government was at length forced into a reluctant step in advance, its first idea, as always in these matters, was to do the thing on the cheap, relying upon the terror of its name to frustrate conspiracies and keep evil-doers in

check. Strange, is it not, that not even the events of the past few years have served to convince our statesmen, wrapped up in the swaddling-clothes of their own ineffable conceit, that terror of the British name has become a minus quantity in this part, at all events, of the African Continent? But for this halting, hesitating and half-hearted disposition of the Imperial Government, there would have been no room for the remarkable self-assertiveness displayed throughout this business by Cecil Rhodes. He was evidently in earnest, in grim earnest, when he gave me to understand three years ago that he would devote his fortune and his powers to the task of undoing the evil that was consummated by the Convention of Pretoria. He has developed a surprising faith in himself and a corresponding contempt for Governments, Colonial as well as Imperial, the one for truckling to a mob that is blind to its own interests and the other for bowing the knee to a pernicious ideal that would end in South Africa becoming, as he says, no place for an Englishman.

His mission is to appeal in both cases from the Government to the people. Ministers in England, he reckons, are sick of South Africa, and not of South Africa alone, but of the whole continent. They are not in earnest about the interior, and unless they are kept up to the mark, they will not see the thing through. They only interest themselves in the natives because a handful of faddists are continually worrying their lives out of them. If proclamations cannot resist the Boers they will not be resisted, and as for offering any opposition to Germany, Mr. Gladstone is about as likely to oppose himself to the powers of

heaven and hell as to withstand Bismarck in anything he may be bent upon. The Colonial Government, again, is afraid of its own supporters. Instead of educating them to the idea that the interior is the natural heritage of the Colony, and South Africa can only cease to be English in order to become German, they are afraid of their own shadows and will meekly take their orders from the country members, unless they are kept up to a proper standard of duty by the agitation of the towns.

There is much to be said in favour of these contentions, for there can be no doubt as to the forward nature of the policy on which the Boer Government is bent. They would probably have been content to wait a decent interval after their new Convention if their hands had not been forced by the declaration of the Protectorate and the appointment as Resident Commissioner of that masterful man, Mr. John Mackenzie, who has more spirit in him, and a better understanding of the local conditions, than all the Governments and High Commissioners combined. He is, perhaps, not the easiest of men to get on with; but it is refreshing to see him labouring at the recognition of his upright and downright ideals while so many of us are enveloped in a haze of time-serving and intrigue. Mr. Mackenzie has much to learn in the ways of placemen. When the British Government says a thing, he actually has the innocence to imagine that they must of necessity mean it. When they fail to notify their rejection of a plan submitted to them, he confidingly supposes that they intend to adopt it. When they appoint an officer to a distant sphere of duty, he labours under the extraordinary delusion that they mean him to employ his unremitting

energies in the fulfilment of the task assigned to him. It never enters into the good man's head that the appointment was only made to satisfy the clamour of an exigent section or to get a troublesome supporter out of the way.

Sir Hercules Robinson is a far more experienced official. He knows only too well that things are not always what they seem. He understands the grades and shades of power and influence in the official hierarchy. He realises that it is one thing for a Minister to instruct him to proclaim a province and quite another matter for "My Lords of the Treasury" to provide him with the requisite funds for maintaining it. To Mr. Mackenzie the intervention of Cecil Rhodes in Bechuanaland is an affront that cannot be borne, an unparalleled audacity that makes him ask whether Rome stands where it stood before. To Sir Hercules Robinson it is a happy issue out of all his afflictions; to the powers that be at home the "elimination of the Imperial factor" is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

With his marvellous talent for compromise, Rhodes has steadily enforced the view that it is of no consequence to whom the individual farms belong, provided the Queen's sovereignty over the country between the Transvaal and the Kalahari is formally acknowledged. Mr. Mackenzie, far more thorough in his ideas, would have the raiders (who have set up Republics of their own under the *ægis* of the Transvaal) driven over the border and the land given out either to British settlers or to loyal natives. These conflicting views and personal jealousies have been the cause of deplorable dissensions amongst those who ought really to have stood together throughout with one heart and one mind. With the

view of educating public opinion to our conceptions, we formed a political association which adopted, at my suggestion, the somewhat high-sounding designation of the Empire League. It serves its turn; but since it consists almost exclusively of Englishmen, and might, therefore, degenerate into a mere rival of the Afrikander Bond, it is not likely that it will be maintained after the present need for it shall have passed away. A separate organisation of Englishmen in an English colony is open to obvious objection: it looks as though the continued maintenance of the British connection were in doubt, and that is a position we do not admit at all. The measures we took for working up public opinion to an adequate appreciation of the issues were thoroughly effective; but a breach has been caused, of course, with those Afrikanders who support the efforts of the Transvaal to effect a practical revival of the Sand River Convention. When the critical occasion is left behind, there will be no effort wanting on our part to effect the healing of that breach. Of all the misfortunes that could happen to the colony, none would be so deplorable as permanent divisions upon racial lines.

Mr. Mackenzie may have been the most well-meaning of men—indeed I think he was—but certainly he was not the most suave. He was heavily handicapped in his official capacity by the fact that he had been a missionary, and he gave everybody around about him the idea that he was capable at any moment of forcing the situation. The Transvaal and the Cape Government alike—Mr. Upington being wholly dependent upon the support of the Afrikander Bond—made his disappearance a *sine qua non* of their co-operation with the High Commissioner in his endeavours to establish a tolerable

state of affairs. Mr. Kruger had opposed to Mr. Mackenzie's idea of an inchoate Protectorate (which was to lead up to annexation by England and the formation of a new Crown Colony: everybody knew that) the antagonistic idea of a couple of nebulous Republics, which were to be ultimately incorporated with the Transvaal. The idea of either party was utterly unwelcome and intolerable to the other, and it was characteristic of Rhodes that he should adopt annexation to the Cape as the solution of the difficulty. There is a saying in Kimberley that Griqualand West is rich in diamonds, but poor in the arts: it will never produce but two contributions to the literature of the period, "Rhodes on Compromise," and "Tarry on Funks": and in one case at all events the jibe is not without point. He went all the way to Land Goshen with his proposals. He came; he saw; but, alas, he did not conquer. He returned in wrath after indulging in the language of menace. It was not his fault, however, that matters were not arranged.

The words of the Special Commissioner being conveyed to Pretoria, the resolution seems to have been quickly taken that they necessitated some decisive act. Mr. Kruger accordingly extended his gracious protection to the chiefs beyond his borders whom his on-and-off burghers had been harrying the lives out of for several months past. Not only this, but he called upon Her Majesty's Government, "in the interests of humanity," to approve and ratify his act!

There is a pass, however, at which even a worm will turn. Mr. Kruger was plainly admonished that he would have to climb down, and climb down he does, with all the Batavian grace at his command, and now Her

Majesty's Government will send out a few thousand men to demonstrate in force what a few hundreds would have sufficed for at the beginning of the year. The idea of incorporating Bechuanaland with the colony is postponed; but that must not be construed as a defeat for Mr. Rhodes. The Upington Ministry dare not propose it, in view of what has now happened to their own supporters, and even that abstention may not save them from ejection when Parliament assembles. The issue of the crisis is a distinct personal triumph for Mr. Rhodes. He comes better out of the business than anybody—better than Upington, better than Kruger, better even than Sir Hercules Robinson, better by far than Mr. Mackenzie; but the sooner the Empire League is dissolved the better. We cannot have two political organisations existing upon racial lines without an eventual struggle for ascendency that would be fatal for all concerned. A mere determination to uphold our treaty rights will leave no bitterness behind. The joy evinced by our young friend at his success in this, his first serious political encounter, is quite delightful to behold. In the course of half-an-hour's conversation that I had with him the other morning, he must have turned on me at least twenty times with the exclamation that has now become the catch-word of his surroundings—"The interior is all right."

THE DAWN OF A GREAT CAREER

TWENTY YEARS AGO

It was in the early seventies that I made the acquaintance of Cecil Rhodes. The voyage to the Cape in those days took over a month, and the mail-steamers were so small, compared with the monsters of 10,000 tons by which the service is now performed, that passengers were thrown together of necessity very much more than they are at the present time, and some of the most abiding of friendships were in that manner made. Rhodes was one of the good ship *Teuton's* complement, whom most of his fellow-passengers said they hoped to see again, as they passed over the side of the ship on a blazing February morning, with something more than a formal meaning.

Less than ten years afterwards, with only an occasional meeting in the interim, found him in the position of one of the first representatives of Griqualand West —the Crown colony then newly annexed to the Cape— and me in that of editor of the oldest local journal. It was one of the constantly recurring seasons of stress and strain in South Africa in which everybody seemed, as they have so often seemed both before and since, to be battling for something or other. Rhodes had found a field for his energies in exciting struggles for personal ascendency and fortune on the diamond-fields, I on the distant frontiers, where Gaikas, Galekas, Tambookies, Zulus and other tribes, more or less fierce, were reduced to subjection in turn. It was not all who bore a part,

however humble, in these military operations, especially in those directed against the Zulus, who approved of the policy they were required to support, and the coercive measures adopted by the Cape Government against the Basutos, which followed later on, became a cause of grave disunion.

My proprietor, Mr. Saul Solomon, the most commanding personality in the House of Assembly, had taken up a very strong line upon these native questions. He had not been so emphatic in his condemnation of the annexation of the Transvaal, in 1876, as the general cast of his principles might have led one to anticipate; but when it appeared that the non-resistance of the Dutch did not imply deliberate acquiescence and that the promises made to the Boers were not being redeemed, he boldly placed himself upon the side of those who declared that the annexation must be undone. I am afraid, however, that the principal actors on the stage at that time cannot be altogether acquitted of the charge of political log-rolling. Mr. Solomon was, first and foremost, a negrophilist, and the aid he rendered to the Boer cause may to some extent have been secured by the consideration that some of the leading Afrikander members were thereby induced to support him in his campaign against the native policy of Sir Bartle Frere and Mr. Sprigg. There was, on the other hand, some reason for the suspicion that this Dutch support was prompted less by love for the native than by hatred of the policy of interference from Downing Street, which had been signified by so many alarming manifestations during the second Administration of Lord Beaconsfield.

Mr. Solomon supported the Boer cause, however, with a difference. His efforts were directed, not towards their

revolt, but towards that peaceful retrocession of the country to which he held the Liberal Government, by the speeches of Mr. Gladstone when in Opposition, to be irrevocably pledged. The insurrection did not modify his views as to the course which honour and policy alike dictated; but his knowledge of Boer character was far too intimate to approve of surrender before the superiority of British arms had been established.

His views on this subject were greatly misunderstood, but his opinions generally on the largest questions of public policy, at no time popular in Cape Town, but always enforced with the most conspicuous eloquence and ability, were by this time so unpopular amongst his immediate surroundings that he determined upon severing his connection with any public journal and at the earliest possible date to retire into private life. His disappearance, in circumstances which lent an element of sadness to feelings of natural regret, was an incalculable loss to the Colony in whose service he had spent his life.

With the aid of Mr. Rhodes I became proprietor as well as editor of the *Cape Argus;* and, in view of what has taken place in the intervening years, it is interesting to recall, so far as memory serves, what his aspirations and his standpoint were in the middle of 1881. In some personal reminiscences of his hero, which he has added to one of Mr. Verschoyle's interesting volumes, Dr. Jameson dates the grand idea of seizing the African interior for England, working through the Cape, from at least as early as 1878. I cannot, of course, presume to set a negative inference against a positive statement of fact, and certainly I am very far indeed from wishing to detract by one iota from the praise and fame to which Mr. Rhodes is justly entitled as the author of that

magnificent conception; but I must confess to having read the statement as made with some measure of surprise. In 1878 Mr. Rhodes had no sort of connection with the Cape. He was not even a member of Council in Griqualand West. It was not until October 1880 that the Diamond-Fields became a part of Cape Colony, nor until six months later that Mr. Rhodes made his first appearance in the Cape Parliament. Furthermore, in 1878 the British Government was in still unchallenged possession of the Transvaal, and there was no occasion at that time for any British subject on the Diamond-Fields to concern himself about the means by which Boer ascendency might be neutralised, since Boer ascendency did not exist.

Personally I should be inclined to date the genesis of the views that were not publicly avowed, so far as I know, until 1884, to the profound impression made upon the mind of Mr. Rhodes by the events of 1880–81. There can be no doubt that he resented Mr. Gladstone's surrender with the unspeakable anger of the militant young Englishman who believes in the past, the present, and the future of his race, combined with a peculiar contempt for the Boers as a people derived from his early associations with Natal and his long residence on the Diamond-Fields, two quarters in which Boers were never (until lately) held in very much respect.

It was necessary, of course, before we entered into the contemplated relationship, that Mr. Rhodes and I should have a formal interchange of views. It was agreed without difficulty that we should steer a middle course so far as native policy was concerned; but the treatment of the natives, Mr. Rhodes strongly insisted, was a question that engaged a great deal more attention

than it deserved. It had long since ceased to be a question whether white or black should be the predominant factor in South Africa. The discovery of diamonds had virtually settled that, and railway extension would do what remained. Recent events had opened up a far more important question: was the white predominance to be English or Dutch?

"Each in its own sphere," was my reply, in substance if not in these exact words.

"You don't think we ought to have sat down under that licking, although I know that Solomon and you think we deserved it, and yet we are to accept the situation!"

"Precisely; it has been made for us, and we can't help it. Time will probably bring for us as for others its revenges, all in due course, but it would be a great waste of energy on our part, and positively unpatriotic, if we tried to hasten them."

"What is your idea, may I ask, about due course?"

"Twenty years, perhaps longer. Who can say? Meanwhile, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. I see no reason for apprehending further conflict with the Dutchmen, and we cannot carry this matter further if I am expected to promote it."

When matters had reached this stage, I well remember that Rhodes took several turns up and down the room as though his patience would not be equal to so prolonged a strain. Finally he said, "I suppose you are right. I must look after my diamonds. High politics had better be left to take care of themselves. I think we understand one another. I don't dislike the Dutchmen. Your plan of working with Hofmeyr is the best—Sprigg, impossible—Solomon, he'd wreck an empire for what he is

pleased to call his principles—and there's nobody else. Yes, I must look after my diamonds; but let us understand one another. We are not going to be trampled upon by these Dutchmen, and if a chance should come——"

"Oh, of course, if they don't keep their place—if they are not satisfied with the inch, but try to get an ell—then it becomes a totally different proposition, and I don't think you'll find me wanting; but the plighted word of England must be faithfully observed. I don't pretend to have many fixed principles; but I do believe in doing to others as we would be done by, and I am sure that vengeance is no policy for a nation such as ours."

And so the bargain was concluded, with firmly fixed resolves on my part; but not, I fear, without certain mental reservations on the part of my young and eager friend.

THE END

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